

PC

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ZONE

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- **Magic Carpet**
- **Inferno**
- **NASCAR Racing**
- **Dark Forces**
- **US Navy Fighters**
- **Ka-50 Hokum**

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owner!

NOV '94
PC
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CYCLEMANIA



**VIDEO RACING
FROM ACCOLADE**

- This month's *Off the Boards*
- *Battle Bugs* from Sierra
- *Master Of Magic* from MicroProse
- And lots of other stuff too!

DOOM II
...Is that it?



SYSTEM SHOCK

Die hard in space

WIN!
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Virtual Reality System



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World Cup Golf is an amazingly-accurate simulation specifically-designed for CD formats. Utilizing full motion video images rendered on SiliconGraphics machines, it plays as well as it looks, and it looks brilliant.

- "The best graphics in a golf game so far."

Games Master.

World Cup Golf faithfully re-creates the format of the actual event but offers many other options.

- 15 alternative championship formats.
- Advanced computer opponents with "artificial intelligence".
- Animated aerial shots of each hole tracking player's ball flight.
- Practice facilities on Putting Green, Driving Range or hole of your choice.
- Precise shot control; 17 clubs, fade/draw, top spin/back spin and shot power.
- Unique guide to land contours.
 - "An extensive range of options ... the definitive golf game."

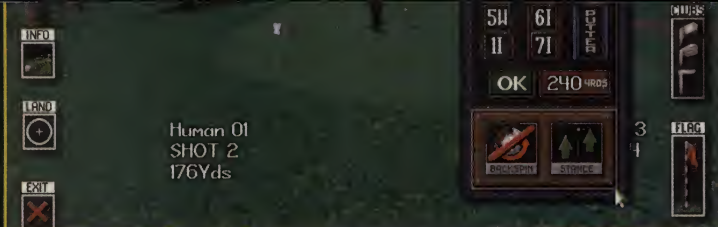
Edge.

- "World Cup Golf looks like the first golf game to better Links Pro."

PC Format.

If you want to be the best in the world, play the best in the world, World Cup Golf.



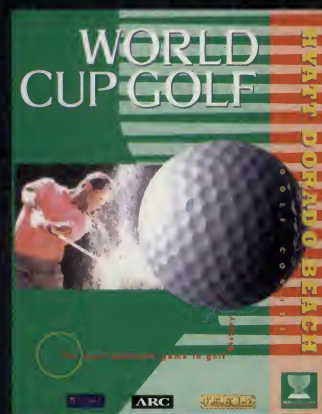


THE
PC CD-ROM
MOST
AUTHENTIC
CD 32
GAME
IN
CD-I
GOLFING
HISTORY

3DO

MEGA CD

ARC



AVAILABLE NOVEMBER '94

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dir.ectory



**Doom II -
see page 60**



● One of the most impressive games we've seen in a good while is *System Shock* from Origin and Looking Glass Technologies. Far superior to any other 3D-adventure/blasty thing, this is the game that seriously puts *Doom II* to shame. It may not have as much blasting action, but it's the best 3D-effort since *Underworld 2*.

PC ZONE



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REVIEWS

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The biggie, the monster, the most spectacular... disappointment of the year... or not?

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PGA grows up and tries very hard to look just like *Links*... and does a better job of it.

71 **Cyclemania (CD)**

Boys in black leather and loud, smelly motorbikes. Accolade has a crack at a 3DO *Road Rash*-alike.

75 **Chaos Engine**

Another Amiga game gets converted several centuries after its original release.

78 **Inferno (CD)**

Another "biggie" from the makers of *TFX*. The best space blast'em ever or a pile of doggie-doo?

87 **KA-50 Hokum**

Not a big chopper joke in sight... honest. Virgin's new helicopter sim proves to be the best yet.

92 **System Shock**

The subject of more superlatives than any other in this issue. *Underworld* in space... and this month's cover girl.

98 **Colonization**

The sequel to *Civilization*, but on a different scale. This time you're colonising America...

102 **Desert Strike**

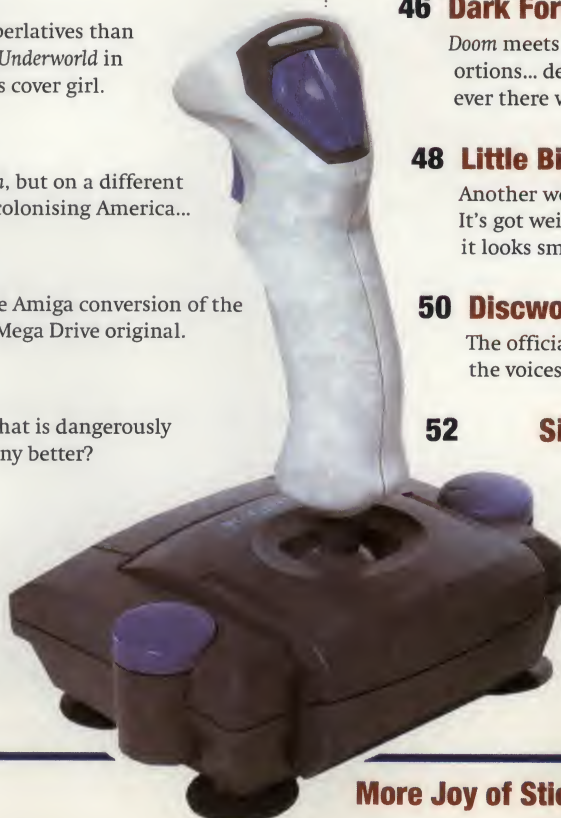
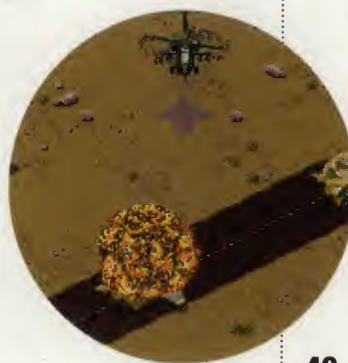
The PC conversion of the Amiga conversion of the SNES conversion of the Mega Drive original.

106 **Alien Legacy**

Sierra releases a game that is dangerously similar to *Outpost*. Is it any better?

108 **Pinball Dreams Deluxe (CD)**

My, what a surprise, another pinball game from 21st Century. Ah, but this time it's on CD and has rendered bits.



109 **NHL Hockey '95 (CD)**

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BLUEPRINTS

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Doom meets *Star Wars*. A pairing of galactic proportions... definitely a trouser-filling experience if ever there was one.

48 **Little Big Adventure**

Another weird French game with a weird title. It's got weird graphics and a weird storyline and it looks smart.

50 **Discworld**

The official *Terry Pratchett* game at last featuring the voices of Dr Who, Baldrick and Eric Idle.

52 **Simon The Sorcerer 2**

Another adventure thing with famous people talking on the CD version. This time it's Chris Barrie and Roger Blake.

54 **Magic Carpet**

Oh my God... oh my God... oh my God. We finally find a use for the word "gobsmacked".



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FEATURES

117 More Joy of Sticks

Yet again, our crack (that's crack, not crap) team of hardened joystick manglers take on a vast multitude of obscenely-shaped controllers and determine which are the best for your needs. Does anyone know how to get rid of calluses?

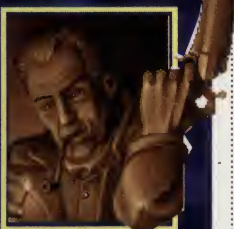
COMPETITIONS

84 CyberMaxx Virtual Reality Competition

Be one of the first people in the country to plug something into the back of your PC which forces you to sit with a pair of LCD screens strapped to your face. Spend hours completely immersed in your gaming environment whilst moving your head around a lot and looking very silly. Win £500 worth of kit by answering just a few insultingly easy questions.

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PC ZONE

100% GAMES

November 1994 Issue Twenty

COVER DISK

HD Disk Version

Master of Magic

MicroProse have done it again with one of their hottest new releases this year. *Master of Magic* combines the best of *Civilization* with the classical



elements of many RPG's. Conquer the world and cast a couple of spells to boot! Just type INSTALL at the "A" prompt. Runs on any 386 or higher.

CD-ROM Version

As you can probably tell, this month we've got a must for all Gravis owners, The Ultrasound Experience. This a complete rendition of what the card can do, and it'll play out of any CD player too! For the Ultrasound owners, there's a whole host of Patches, Midi files and Mod's. If that isn't enough there are also demo's from Assembly '94; Motorbike action with *Cyclemania* from Accolade; *Battle Bugs* from Sierra, Shitloads of shareware and some other stuff. Oh, and there's *Master of Magic* too.



Bulletin

Flight Unlimited



"T'S BEAUTIFUL! WOW! I feel like a bird!"* were just some of the amazin' superlatives used by various punters at the Autumn ECTS (European Computer Trade Show) held last September when they stepped into the cockpit of Looking Glass Technologies' fab new flight sim *Flight Unlimited*.

To say it is graphically superior to anything ever seen before is a bit of an understatement (as the screenshots will testify) and it handles, as one bloke – claiming to be a pilot – who was standing agog waiting for a go with the Forte VFX1 VR head unit, "Just like the real thing," – though he could, of course, have been a plant taking a break from the Paul McKenna show.

As well as looking totally whizzo in the visuals department, the simulation is said to be the most advanced and realistic to date, with different planes to fly (ranging from gliders to stunt planes), each with their own handling characteristics and a number of acrobatic moves to master. The game also features a "tutor" mode that teaches the pilot how to fly and indulge in various aerobatic manoeuvres. Although the flying area is quite small (at around six square miles) it is on a continuous loop to make sure you don't run out of sky. There is also the option to link up via a modem and fly with friends.

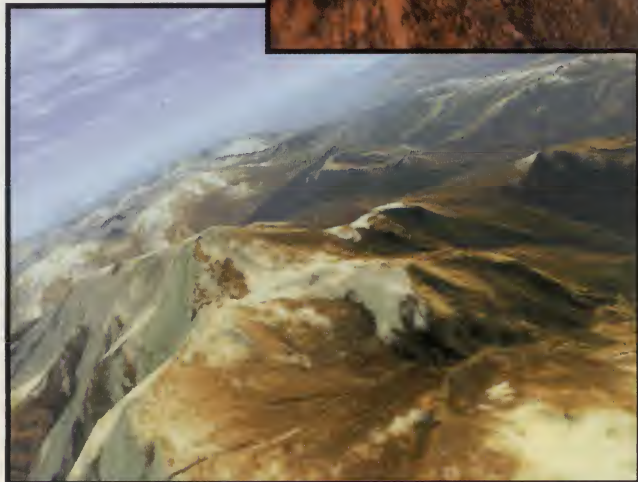
A combat version is planned for release early next year for those who get bored unless there's something to shoot at. Until then you'll have to be content with looping the loop and saying "WOW!" every time you play it.

Flight Unlimited is due to be ready for release this Christmas on CD-ROM only.

*Not strictly true.



(Above) You can choose what plane you want to fly, get on-board tutoring and even go loop the loop.
(Left) Cool! Look at those lovely landscapes. Pretty or what?



THE FIRST TRULY INTERACTIVE MOVIE

UNDER A

Killing Moon

"DESERVES THE ATTENTION OF
ANYONE WITH A CD-ROM DRIVE."
CD-ROM NOW 91%

"CANDIDATE FOR BEST GAME OF
THE YEAR."
PC HOME 93%

CLASSIC GAME AWARD WINNER
CD-ROM MAGAZINE 5/5



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ACCESS SOFTWARE presents a CHRIS JONES production UNDER A KILLING MOON story by AARON CONNERS artistic direction by DOUG VAN DEGRIFT music by JON CLARK set design by NATHAN ZARSON, NEIL GALLOWAY, RALPH YARRON, technical direction by BRUCE WARD, BRUCE JOHNSON.

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Bulletin

Championship Manager 2

The best is about to get better, which means more very long nights trying to play worn footie clichés galore as *Championship Manager 2* (CM2) finally enters the now bulging arena of footie management simulations.

What kept *Championship Manager* at the top for so long was undoubtedly its very user-friendly interface and quite brilliant option menu system that made it incredibly quick and easy to use. The only criticisms that were really levelled against it were that it was a tad easy once you got the hang of it and a little bit on the slow side.

Thankfully, fans of the original will be glad to hear that the programmers have taken all this on board and kept to the same basic framework, adding high-res graphics, stereo chanting and "dynamic" match sequences with full-text commentary to liven up the in-game side of things.

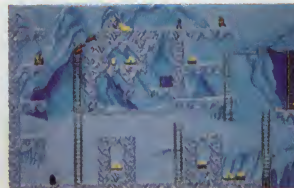
The new version will also include the Scottish League, international management opportunities (as long as you're not called Graham) and an enhanced player exchange system. It will, of course, include detailed, up-to-date team and player stats, all wrapped up in an enhanced presentation package.

Unfortunately, you won't be able to use your existing saved games with CM2 due to the fact that it uses much more data and an improved



(Above) *Championship Manager 2*: All other footie management games nil.

player set-up routine. There is, however, an end of 1994 season data up-date disk due out very soon to keep it all current.



Ever wondered what happened to that old classic *Loderunner*?

Get a Lode of this!

If you're a bit of a saddy when it comes to computer games you'll be glad to hear that there is now a Spectrum emulator out for the PC that enables you to play all those old favourites, such as *Sabre Wolf*, *Jetpack* and even, heaven forbid, the granddaddy of them all, *Manic Miner*. There's also an Amiga emulator on the way, so you can at last play side scrolling classics such as *Alien Breed*, *Sensible Soccer* and *Cannon Fodder* on your PC as they were intended.

If, on the other hand, you're not quite prepared to go to the trouble of sorting out an emulator, but always wondered what ever happened to that fabulously playable classic *Loderunner*, then Sierra will now be at the top of your Christmas list. Yes, they've taken the old classic, dusted it down and given it the PC makeover treatment, and rather good it looks too.

Anyone who has played the original *Loderunner* will know that there's plenty in the way of gameplay, but there are now ten different background screens for each group of levels, as well as new tools in the form of cannon balls, snares and

befuddling gas to help you take out the manic monks. You can also design your own levels using a sophisticated screen editor to make things as easy or difficult as you like.

Expect more where this came from as other publishers buy up old classics and give them the "Anne & Nick" treatment for the nineties.

DISPATCHES

+++ Iron Angel

Looking ahead, Ocean's new hi-tech flight sim *Iron Angel* due for release early next year (yeah right – we remember the original release date for *Inferno* – make that some time next century!) puts the player in a cock-pit of a technically advanced HAF (High Altitude Fighter) with a mission brief to (yawn!) blast the enemy from the skies, thereby averting a nuclear war.

It does, however, feature a rather slick, silicon graphics intro, multi-bit objects (i.e. it is possible to blow the turret off a tank and watch the rest of it scuttle to safety), "intelligent" enemies with different fighting styles and skills, and totally flexible missions that enable the player to fly the world on various sorties.

No modem link-up or VR compatibility is confirmed as of yet, though Ocean maintain that both are "highly likely".

+++ Sonic Boom Sony

Sony has just launched a rather tasty-looking speaker system that sits under your monitor and packs more bass than a Nolan sisters concert, thanks to a special sound cavity and two-way bass reflex design. Apart from looking and sounding rather good, it's also very easy to use, with front-panel inputs for headphones, microphones and other audio/video sources, whilst back-panel inputs and outputs allow connection to a CD-ROM drive or sound card. It even comes with its very own AC adaptor. It's not exactly a bargain at £89 (+VAT), but if space is at a premium on your desk and you like things looking smart give Sony a ring on 0932 816615 to find out where you can get one.

Lookin' and soundin' good – Sony's CSS-B100T Computer SpeakerSystem.



Lemmings, Lemmings, Lemmings...

THEY'RE back, there's more than ever and they're coming to a screen near you this month! *All New World Of Lemmings* is the third in the mega successful series and it looks and plays better than ever.

The Lemmings, having escaped from Lemmings Island, have been sailing the seven seas for many months and finally reach a cluster of 12 islands which they decide to colonise. Players must guide the remaining three Lemming Tribes – Egyptian, Classic and Shadow – to safety as they attempt to tame a new homeland.

As well as featuring more animated Lemmings that actually wear the traditional costume of their tribe, the of Lemmings skills has been stripped down to a core of essential abilities for more instinctive gameplay. More gameplay is offered as the player is now required to release trapped Lemmings rather negotiating



each level from end to end.

Also on the way is the extremely difficult *Lemmings 3D*. Although very much in the development stage, it's already looking good with beautifully animated Lemmings and a new range of skills to master. Psygnosis is planning a Lemmings paint-ball game that might not look too dissimilar to *Cannon Fodder*. Let's hope it's not like their last attempt, *Theatre Of Death*.

DOMINUS

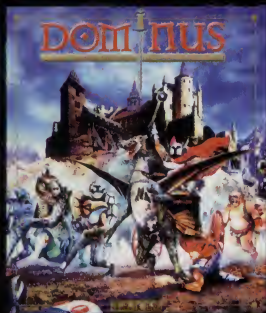
YOU'LL NEVER PLAY THIS GAME AGAIN!

THE NEW STRATEGY GAME THAT'S
DIFFERENT EVERY TIME YOU PLAY.

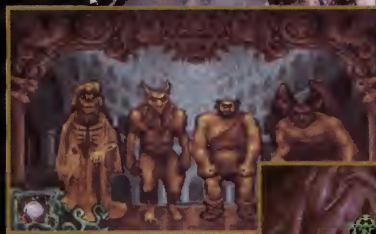
Dominus is a new genre of strategic war game. A real time simulation that blends the best elements of fantasy role playing and hand to hand combat, Dominus allows you to stand back and run the war from above, or grab a weapon and join the fray. So you can fight the way you want. And with four difficulty levels, Dominus is fun for first-time players and war game veterans alike. Defend your domain from invading clans by

deploying monsters, casting spells, setting traps, capturing your enemies and interrogating them in the dungeon. Then combine your helpless prisoners with your

hideous monsters to create your own more powerful hybrids. Each of your decisions causes different strategies and reactions in your enemies, so every game is unique. Grab your sword and leap into Dominus.



**It's a whole new breed
of gameplay!**



CD-ROM & IBM PC

386 or higher
25 MHz or above (33 MHz recommended)
VGA videocard
DOS 5.0 or higher

CD Drive - single speed
(double speed recommended)
SoundBlaster™ and 100% compatibles
Mouse or Keyboard interface
Hard-drive space required, 35Mb

Screenshots are only intended to be illustrative of the gameplay and not the screen graphics which may vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and be subject to the computer's specifications.

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U.S. GOLD

Bulletin

DISPATCHES

+++ Mouse & Match

If you're into a bit of mix and match, won't be seen dead out shopping without your Habitat carrier bag and would rather visit Beirut than Millets, those swingers from Logitech have got the mouse combo for you.

Their new Chroma Mouse package is aimed at the PC user who wants to personalise his or her PC environment and look a bit dapper in the process without compromising performance. With four different colour combos to choose from – a green mouse with an orange mouse pad, a blue mouse with a yellow pad, a yellow mouse with a green pad and an orange mouse with a blue pad – as well as a special screen saver – the package represents excellent value for money as it comes with dedicated step-saving software which allows the PC user to shortcut various operations using the second and third mouse buttons.

The Chroma Mice are guaranteed for 12 months and are priced at a very reasonable £22. Dedicated followers of fashion need only apply. Contact Logitech on 0344 894300.

Mix and match with Logitech – If you want a mouse with matching mat you'll have to buy two!

+++ Novastorm brewin'

The long-awaited sequel to *Microcosm* from Psygnosis is finally due for release later this month. Previously known as *Scavenger 4* (why do some publishers insist on changing the name of a product after it's already been previewed – is there something they'd like us to forget?) it's being pitched as the slickest shoot 'em up this side of Mars, with four different worlds, FMV clips and stunningly rendered graphics. In an effort to make the game more playable and less linear the programmers have also added interactive backgrounds that your ship can crash into, and more "intelligent" foes. Hmm. Sounds, err, different.



It looks pretty stunning, but do we really need another linear shoot 'em up?

Sense and Sensi-activity

It's nearly here, it's bigger than ever and it's got more sad haircuts than a stadium full of Millwall supporters (presuming that there are enough Millwall fans to fill a stadium that is – let's just assume it's a pretty small stadium). *Sensible World of Soccer* promises to be the most detailed, realistic and playable football sim ever, with over 1,400 football teams, 22,000 players, each with real player names, faces, kits, skills and values etc., as well as a massive world transfer market with accurate and changing player values.

Players will be able to choose to manage/play any professional team in the entire world, opt to play action or management-only games (for those who aren't very good – basically anyone called Keith) and customise their squad's tactics, set plays, free kicks, corners etc., for complete control.

Each squad will have 16 players, first and second kits, all manager/player names, shirt numbers, skin/hair types, players positions, skills and values as well as a nominated set-piece expert.

Each player will be rated in terms of heading, tackling, passing, ball control, speed, shot power, finishing and fitness, and it will be up to the manager to position his players (in conjunction with tactical formations) to receive maximum benefit from their abilities. Players can be

PSV

1	HANS VAN BREUKELLEN	G
12	WIM DE RON	RB
2	BERRY VAN AERLE	LB
5	JAN HEINTZE	D
3	ADRI VAN TIGGELEN	D
13	ERNEST FABER	D
6	GHEORGHE POPESCU	DF
7	JUUL ELLERMAN	RM
11	ARTHUR NUMAN	LMF
4	ERWIN KOEMAN	M
14	EDWARD LINSKENS	M
8	GERALD VANENBURG	M FP
15	PETER HOEKSTRA	A
10	WIM KIEFT	A
16	KALUSHA BWALYA	A
9	ROMARIO	A FP

COACH HANS WESTERHOF

NETHERLANDS

FIRST KIT

SECOND KIT

Match in progress: 1. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 2. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 3. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 4. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 5. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 6. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 7. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 8. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 9. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 10. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 11. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 12. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 13. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 14. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 15. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY) 16. 16 GROUP OF 16 (TOP 2 IN EACH GROUP QUALIFY)

Sensible World of Soccer – the next generation (Amiga version). The PC version will play from an isometric 45 degree angle a la FIFA Soccer.

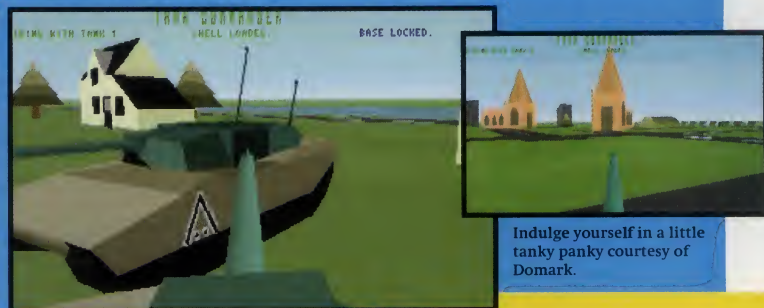
instance, if a player with a low heading ability attempts to head the ball unchallenged, he will probably reach the ball. However, if the same player is in competition with a player with a higher skill level, it is likely that the other player will win the ball.

The new game will be released first on the Amiga before Christmas with the PC version following early next year.

Tanks A Lot

There has been an explosion of tank and battle sims onto the PC recently, all jockeying for prime position. The problem is, unless you're a bit of a rivet counter, they can be incredibly difficult to get into, and about as visually appealing as a three week old dog turd. Well, that's about to change (thankfully) with a new tank battle sim from Domark due for release early next year called *Tank Commander*.

Anyone familiar with the old arcade classic *Battle Zone* won't be disappointed with the graphics and gameplay, whilst strategy fans can fully immerse themselves in a massive player environment spanning nine maps and encompassing over 40 missions in a fully interactive, real-



time 3D-world. In addition to your tank you will also be in control of a number of support vehicles including jeeps, microlights, motorbikes and other tank platoons.

The game supports a multi-player option allowing full Serial Link, Modem Link and IPX Network games as well as a full multi-media Interface detailing the history of warfare for when it all gets just too exciting.

Screen Saver?

There could be less PC's on the shelves this year due to a shortage of the right kind of glass. Only a handful of manufacturers produce the high-quality lead glass used in making the tubes, and they are now working flat out to meet the huge demand expected this Christmas.



BE THERE AT THE BIRTH OF A NATION

Sid Meier's
COLONIZATION



Sid Meier's

DON'T SETTLE FOR ANYTHING LESS!



FOR IBM PC COMPATIBLES


"Role Playing Games
are not what they
used to be..."




Mike Singleton's **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**


In partnership with
Domark, legendary games designer
Mike Singleton has produced the most
visually impressive PC Role Playing Game
of all time. Lead the Lords of Midnight
against the Black Citadel of Boroth the
Wolfheart across beautiful real time 3D
generated landscapes and alongside a huge
cast of interactive characters.




 Move and Touch game environment gives you access to an Interactive Book, including an Almanac and Bestiary, the Traveller's Guide, an in game map, information on Heroes and Villains, an updated calendar and diary and the structure of all your Fellowships and Alliances.




 Stunning real-time 3D fractally generated landscapes in full first person perspective.

 All the action takes place in a diurnal environment so that the sun sets and rises, the seasons change, winter comes and the snow falls, all of which will affect the progress of your armies.



 Advanced artificial intelligence allows you to communicate with and control a large cast of superbly 3D animated characters.

 Vast playing area that includes mountain ranges, valleys, beaches, estuaries, islands, plains and forests, all shown using glorious 3D graphics.

EB
©94

DOMARK®

Bulletin

Retribution is sweet

Gremlin has suddenly decided to go all posh-like and follow the trend adopted by so many other software publishers at the moment by adding the word "Interactive" to its name. Hopefully, the person responsible for the innovative re-naming is not involved in the games development side of things otherwise Gremlin (Interactive) would be in real trouble.

At least its new release, *Retribution*, a kind of mission-based strategy/action flight (shoot'em up and down) spectacular can boast a bit of originality.

The year was 2396 and Earth was on the edge of a terrible war that would almost certainly result in self-

destruction. Then, from another world, came the Krellians who intervened in the conflict and brought peace. Being all-round alien good eggs they also introduced new technology and medicine and the human race grew and prospered. Then, quite suddenly, the population on colonies in the outer reaches began to disappear. Everyone on Earth was a mighty bit perplexed by this



The rather super-looking *Retribution* from the newly-named Gremlin Interactive.

and no doubt a little worried, until, that is, a lone survivor reveals that the all-round good egg types aren't really all that nice at all, and are secretly breeding Mankind as a source of high-protein food for the Krellian homelands. You (understandably) are a bit miffed at this and become driven by one compulsion.... **RETRIBUTION!**

Apart from having a plot straight out of a rather ambitious B-movie, the game boasts stunning state-of-the-art, real-time landscaping technology, no less than 11 major campaigns (each consisting of 50 different missions), training levels, "intelligent" enemies and even smoke! In other words, it sounds rather good and it's due out in November.

Lovely Logitech

Logitech are launching what they describe as "revolutionary" new pointing devices, which probably means oh discerning readers that they've gone and re-invented the mouse by adding a dab of colour to that otherwise pale and boring desk-tip accessory, but then, who knows? That's about it really, but it does give us the excuse to include this rather stonksome piccie they sent us.

Would ya just take a look at those lovely contours!



Power Slide

YET ANOTHER multi-platform rally game cometh unto the PC this November, but this time from Elite. Unlike *Powerdrive* from US Gold (previewed last month), which uses a console-like, top-down, isometric view, Elite's *Power Slide* puts you right behind the wheel in the thick of the action, making full use of their "Virtual Modelling" concept. With the emphasis firmly on realism and driving action, players can opt for a Front, Rear or Four-wheel drive car, race against the clock or head to head with another player.

The game features a full 3D-dynamic view, whilst your car can pitch, skew, slide and even roll over as you battle with the controls. Courses range from Welsh forests to Scandinavian glaciers and are fully interactive, so you can go where you want. At the moment it looks like knocking seven bells out of every other rally sim on the market when it is released in mid-November.

DISPATCHES

+++ Sounds rather good...

Silica systems are going all SCSI with a new sound card pack and CD-ROM bundle, priced at a rather competitive £59 and £120 (+VAT) respectively. You don't really need to know much else except that the sound card in question is based on the Jazz 16-bit chip and comes complete with three arcade games, whilst the CD-ROM bundle features the Media Vision CDR-H93MV drive, SCSI cable and three CDs. Altogether, not a bad little SCSI set-up for a combined price of £188 (+VAT). Contact Silica on 081 309 1111.



+++ Bargain alert

MJN are now offering new DX2-66 PCs for just £799 (+VAT) in a bid to increase their market share. The PCs feature 4Mb of RAM, a 170Mb hard drive and a 14" SVGA non-interlaced monitor and comes with Windows pre-loaded. The system carries a full-year's warranty and a three-year guarantee on parts. If you've got the readies, they're also doing three Pentium machines starting at £1,599 (+VAT). Contact MJN on 0282 777555.



+++ DOOMmaster Tournament

There is still time to enter the National UK DOOMmaster Tournament, scheduled for early November, here in London. If you think you're good enough, send the form that appeared in last month's mag or fax your details through on 071 436 1321 (clearly marked DOOMmaster Tournament) to register your entry. Alternatively, you can call the DOOMmaster Tournament Hotline (071 917 7693) on



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NEW WORLD COMPUTING, INC.

PO Box 4302, Hollywood, CA 90078

Bulletin

DISPATCHES

Wednesdays after 2pm and give your details over the phone. Contestants will be selected on availability and will be given 28 days notice by telephone or in writing.

+++ Jungle Fever

It looked absolutely fantastic on the SNES and Mega Drive and it's due out on the PC this month. Disney's magical movie game *The Lion King* will now be available on just about every platform you can think of, boasting over 2,000 new frames of animation drawn specially by Disney artists. There will also be an adapted version of the original film score, including songs from Elton John and Tim Rice (but don't let that put you off!).

The game follows the story of the film in close detail, spanning two distinct stages spread across ten levels (plus bonus sections), and charts the growth of the young cub to lion prince. It's not just a pretty face however, and promises oodles in the way of gameplay with fully-controllable, colourful sprites and lush backgrounds. What's more, with the collective media might of Disney and Virgin behind it, *Jungle Fever* just can't fail. Move over Sonic, your spikes are looking decidedly blunt.



+++ More Speakers (Yawn!)

Spectravideo have just released a new speaker combo for the PC that they're calling "Bubbling Void". Don't ask why, they just are Okay? Apart from looking rather nice and packing a total power output of 15 watts per channel, they also feature magnetic shielding, ABEC (Advanced Bass Enhancer Circuitry, to you and me), a cable remote control and they can be fixed to the sides of your monitor. The Bubbling Void speakers can be used on any computer with an audio output or PC card and will retail at only £29.99. Contact SpectraVideo on 081 902 2211.

+++ More Heavy Metal

We've already gone on about how wonderful Activision's *MechWarrior* looks (will it ever be



Computer Shopper Show Alert

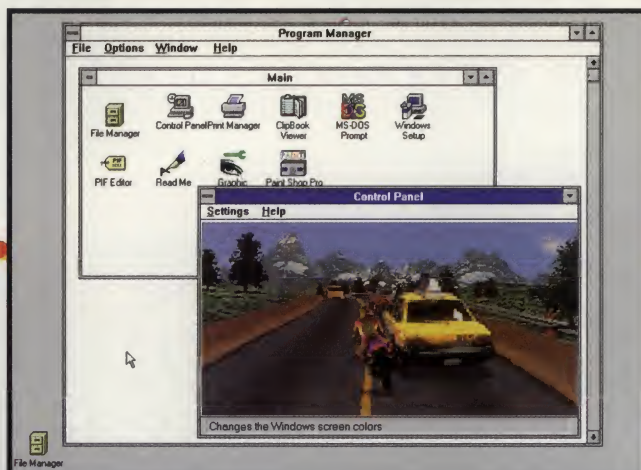
Yes, it's that time of year again. The lights have gone up in Oxford Street, Woolies have started stocking those horrible, cheap chokky "compilation" packs with a reindeer on the front, and games fans across the land are itching with expectation to get down to the biggest computer show this side of the moon.

Yes, the Christmas Computer Shopper Show is back, and it's bigger than ever before. Not only will you be able to scoot around catching up on the latest releases from all the major software publishers, picking up bargains direct from the manufacturers as you go, but there will also be a special Advice Centre to help you get exactly what you want.

PC ZONE will be there, of course, in the massive Leisure Zone Arena where you can come along and meet some of the team and try your hand at the latest new releases. This year we've got the best in game challenges for you to indulge in, including networked *Doom*, *Dark Forces* and *Magic Carpet*. Try your hand at our head-to-head driving compo and lounge about the *CD-ROM Magazine* multi-media area to get a preview of what'll be on the shelves next year.

The show is to be held at the Grand Hall, Olympia in London between 1st and 4th of December. Tickets are now on sale (priced at £6 for adults). Call the Ticket Hotline now on 071 373 8141 and save up to £2.

Check out the latest and greatest games in the PC Zone Leisure Arena.



3DOBlaster Card

The long-awaited 3DO console has finally gone on sale in the UK amid much excitement and fervour and it looks set to knock the stuffing out of the current crop of "home entertainment" systems when it comes to gameplay. The system, which suffered a bad press in the UK after sales in the USA last year failed to meet expectations, now boasts a new breed of quite stunning games, such as EA's *Road Rash* and the remarkably good *FIFA Soccer*, and sales of the system look set to rocket.

"Why are you telling me this when I've just bought a PC?" I hear you cry. Well, smart arses, those clever bods at Creative are releasing a 3DOBlaster card that will enable you to play 3DO games on your PC. Details are a little fuzzy as yet, but the card - which may or may not come with its own CD-ROM drive or controller - will retail for "around the same price as the 3DO unit or less".

There is already talk of a 64-bit upgrade based on the Power PC chip for the unit, though this is, as they say, a long way off.

The 3DOBlaster card is due for release around Christmas and the team at Creative are currently negotiating exactly what to bundle with the card - we'll keep you posted.

SuperKarts Winner

THE WINNER of our *SuperKarts* competition ran in last month's issue is Mr Paul Britchford from Cambridge. He wins a day at the prestigious F1 track in London.

The lucky 25 runners up will receive a copy of the finished game as soon as it is released.

The top speed of a Formula e Super Kart is, incidentally, a very scary 160 miles per hour. Well done to all the winners. Tough luck to all you losers out there - never underestimate the power of a pretty postcard!

(Right) Mr Paul Britchford - the lucky winner.



Ice. Cameras. Action!

It's the fastest game on ice, with the slickest presentation. But when the cameras start to roll on NHL® Hockey 95, you'd better make like a Boy Scout and be prepared. Because if you thought it was quick on disk, wait until you see the CD version. Every pass sends the puck reeling, every slap shot's a net-ripping 'keeper's nightmare. And you'd be better off in front of an express train than trying to stop these stick-waving hockey stars.

Away from the ice, there's TV-style production values including video clip highlights of NHL® action and genuine NHLPA™ players. The front end and setup screens deliver a new high in graphic excellence thanks to hi-resolution SVGA graphics. There are more teams, more options and, of course, all the outstanding features you'd expect from NHL® Hockey.

So if you're looking for the hottest action, we've put it on ice.



Composite screenshot

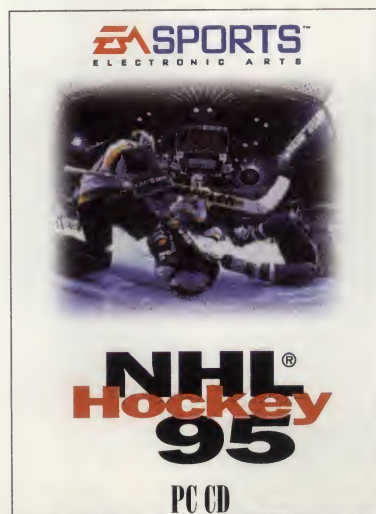


PHASE 9
PHANTOM 2

Ultimate ice hockey control with the
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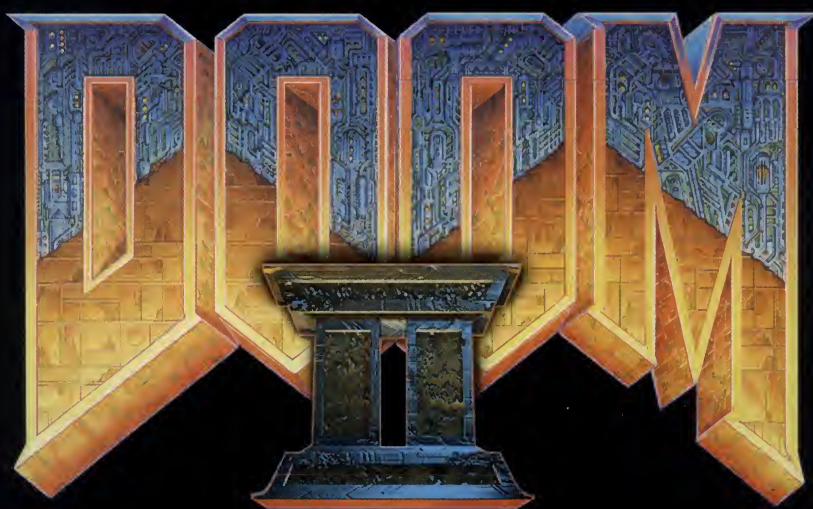
For more details or to order call 0262 602541.

For more information about NHL '95 PC CD, call 0753 549 442 or write to Electronic Arts, 90 Heron Drive, Langley, Slough, Berks SL3 8XP. NHL and the logo of the NHL are registered trademarks of the National Hockey League and are used under license by Electronic Arts. NHLPA, National Hockey League Players' Association and the logo of the NHLPA are Trademarks of NHLPA and are used under license, by Electronic Arts, Inc. EA SPORTS, the EA SPORTS logo and "IF IT'S IN THE GAME, IT'S IN THE GAME" are all trademarks of Electronic Arts.



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let the obsession BEGIN

AGAIN!

Bulletin

Alone In The Dark 2 & 3 CD

THE MASTER of polygoned people of truly preposterous proportions, Infogrames, is back with the second (enhanced CD-ROM version) and third installments of the monster classic *Alone In The Dark*.

The biggest criticism of *Alone 2 HD* was that it was unlike the original game. Well, Infogrames have taken this on board and made a few adjustments. For a start they've improved the animation and given the characters more depth, used three-dimensional animation for objects and backgrounds so that more can be picked up, given the characters a higher "intelligence" and made the whole thing four times faster! They have even added a magic short-cut that allows the player to bypass the maze at the beginning of the game.

Unlike its predecessors, *Alone 3* will be released on CD-ROM first with a floppy version planned some months later. Again, it is technically superior to its predecessors and draws heavily on the experience gained in developing the first two games, with an improved subjective 3D-view, swirling camera angles and even better animation. As it's the final game in the series, there's even a rumour that the much loved hero, Carnby, dies and comes back to life as a cougar. Always thought those French were a bit weird!

Alone 2 CD-ROM is due for release in November with the final installment slated for release early next year.



Alone in the Dark III on CD... This time good ol' Carnby buys it and comes back as a Cougar!



Pythonise your PC courtesy of the new interactive comedy CD-ROM.

No, we're not talkin' about the latest batch of releases for the Archimedes, but the world's first

"Interactive Comedy Show" on CD-ROM. Monty Python's *Complete*

Waste of Time gives you the

opportunity to interact with

entirely new comedy and

animation, enjoy your

favourite sketches, test

your skill with demented

games and even sing

along to the infamous

"Lumberjack" song.

The CD-ROM also incorpor-

ates the unique "Desktop Pythonizer"

that allows you to customize your PC with

elements from the original TV series. Nudge,

nudge, wink, wink, say no more, say no more!

Except that it's priced at

£54.99 and available, as they

say, from all your usual

outlets. Contact Longman

Logotron on 0223 425558.

DISPATCHES

released or was it all just a cunning wheeze?), agogged a plenty at how great Sierra's *Metaltech* and *Battledrome* look, and now we're expected to do it all again about *Iron Assault*, the stonking new, walking-robot, battle sim blaster from Virgin.

There's nothing really new to shout about that hasn't been mentioned regarding the other two of this ilk, suffice to say that it promises stonksome arcade action, detailed missions, a strong strategical bent and a variety of realistic, 3D, texture-mapped battle environments (ranging from storm-swept deserts to built-up cities) in which to stomp around in. And spookola - there's a modem link option too! *Iron Assault* is due for release in December.

+++ Bioforge-ing ahead

Electronic Arts' new interactive movie *Bioforge*

(Below) Looks like Mr Cyborg has been spending a little too long with his bullworker eh?



is set for a December release, and looks set to challenge the many peoples' jaded perception of the genre. You control a half-man, half machine Cyborg called Lex who must defeat a rather gruesome collection of morphing aliens using your physical enhancements (ooh-errh).

Like just about everything else on CD nowadays, it boasts stunning graphics, digital soundtrack and a fully-digitised 3D-player character and digitised environment.

+++ Wings Of Glory 1917-1918

"Yet another WWI flight sim," you moan. Yes it is, but this one's rather special and it's historically accurate. Using Origin's RealSpace graphics engine the game relies on sheer skill rather than lazer-guided missiles and infrared bombs. With a choice of over five planes to choose from (Sopwith Pup, Camel, SE5a, SPAD XIII and the Fokker Dr.I.) and an "Instant Mission Generator" that lets you fly against any combination of enemies you choose.

WOG 1917-18 is sure to be shooting the

A Complete Waste Of Time



IBM

OS/2. FOR GAMERS WHO ARE NOT JUST PLAYING AT IT

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Direct Computer Supplies

Hanley 0782 206808

F A B Computers

Aldridge 0922 59380

Game Ltd

Manchester 061 839 5101

Southampton 0703 237771

Coventry 0203 256148

Romford 0708 734803

Leeds 0532 465320

W/Thurrock 0708 890008

Hemel Hempstead 0442 233882

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VIRTUAL REALITY

Moorgate (London) 071 256 7210

Even with an ample supply of RAM, resolving and allocating expanded, extended and conventional memory can be a constant battle. Even for a qualified PC expert. With the growing number of entertainment packages, each demanding a different memory configuration, the essential reboot is becoming more and more frustrating.

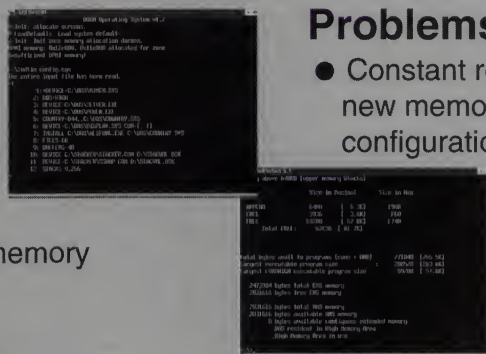
Prepare to gain access to a new level of game play.

OS/2 unlocks the 32 bit potential of the PC, allowing the 640K memory barrier breakthrough. Memory configurations can be changed on the fly and with OS/2's built-in Crash Protection, guarding programs from damage is child's play.

Why delay serious gameplay with complicated setups or struggle with memory violations? For serious gamers, OS/2 is the only serious alternative.

Problems.....

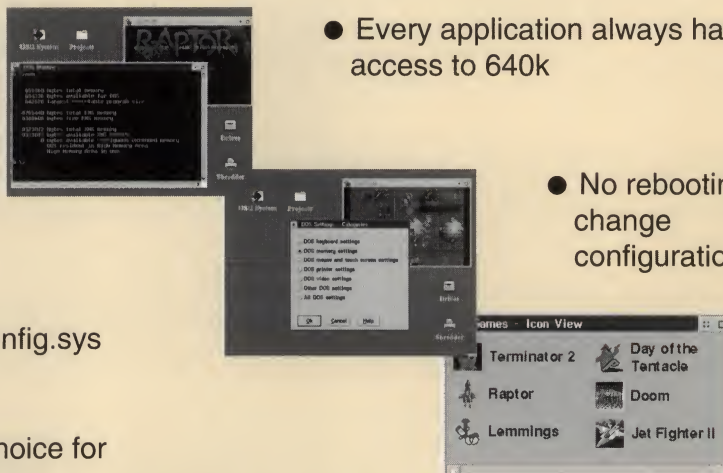
- Constant rebooting for new memory configurations
- Irritating error messages and crashes



- Frustrating 640k memory limitations
- Continuous config.sys editing

.....Solved with OS/2 !

- Every application always has access to 640k



- Never edit the config.sys again
- The SERIOUS choice for SERIOUS gamers



Bulletin

DISPATCHES



Wings of Glory looks as though it could be one of the most impressive sims from Origin so far. How well will it fare against Rowan Software's Dawn Patrol though?

opposition down in flames when it is released in November.

Lost, but not forgotten

The quite remarkably lush *Lost Eden* (formerly known as *Eden* and *Saurus*) is now due for a November release.

It's set in the past (or is it the future?) where walking, talking dinosaurs and homosapiens live together in a kind of prehistoric harmony. In other words, the docile herbivores are dominated by man who wages a constant war against the ever-hungry carnivores led by a terrifying Tyrannosaurus Rex.

In an attempt to establish some kind of order, Adam (aka you, the player) must rediscover the wisdom of the lost citadels, and with the help of characters enlisted on the way, build new citadels to fend off the carnivore attacks. Far from being just another game cashing in on the dinosaur scene, *Lost Eden* is a beautifully-animated blend of adventure and strategy which uses stunning 3D-images and speech to transport the player into fantasy world.



Microsoft's new Natural Keyboard - Forget RSI, it's excellent for two-player games that use the keyboard. The "cool" blue mouse shaped like a house.

Microsoft Take The Strain

There's been a lot of stuff in the news recently about RSI (Repetitive Stress Injury), especially in the US where they seem to send out writs like us Brits send out Christmas cards. Basically, people are getting worried about the affects of sitting in front of glaring screens, hammering away at keyboards for hours on end. In response to this, those lovely people at Microsoft have gone and spent millions of dollars on developing a new keyboard that will help take the strain out of key tapping.

Although it sticks to the normal QWERTY layout, The Natural Keyboard is split in the middle and features such exciting additions as a wrist-rest and special *Windows* keys that will no doubt be used in conjunction with *Chicago* (*Windows 4*) when it finally appears next year.

Most important of all, however, is that due to its exceptionally large design it is especially useful for two-player games that use the keyboard (such as *Star Control 2* and just about every footie game) whilst you can play *Doom* forever without getting all hunched up.

Microsoft are also releasing two new mice, bundled with the extremely easy-to-use IntelliPoint software. The Mouse 2.0 is designed for the office user, whilst the Home Mouse (actually shaped like a house) is slightly smaller with a raised primary button and finished in "cool" slate blue. The software bundled with the mice enables users to customise their PC environment and change the cursor to an aeroplane or even a slice of pizza.

The Natural Keyboard is expected to retail at around £69 (+VAT), whilst the mice can be snapped up for £39 and £27 (+VAT) respectively.

Contact Microsoft on 0734 270 001.

Dragon Lore - The Legend (finally) Begins

The long-awaited graphic adventure from Mindscape, *Dragon Lore: The Legend Begins* is now slated for a pre-Christmas (hopefully they mean this Christmas!) release.

The game uses an intuitive point-and-click interface (guided by a sort of fluttering

bat/dragon-type creature, if you know what I mean) and is viewed from an all-in, first-person perspective that seats the player deep within the game's beautifully SGI rendered 3D-environment.

To say that the game is graphically stunning is something of an under-statement.



Cannon Fodder 2: more manic mini-sprite mayhem ahoy!

Cannon Fodder 2

Cor Blimey! You wouldn't have guessed it would you? Those Sensible people are going to release a sequel to that classic point-and-shoot bonanza *Cannon Fodder* - now what a surprise!

It uses the same game engine as the original, a horde of new vehicles to rush around in, new weapons and some very tough conflicts. It's being produced by the same people as before (i.e. Jools and the gang) with one or two new faces, and the guys are currently busy sourcing new material at the War Museum (presumably they mean the IWM). *Cannon Fodder 2: The Sequel To Cannon Fodder* is scheduled for a November release.



Flight of Fancy

Take the best parts from two best-selling adventures, namely *Monkey Island* and *Indiana Jones*, put them together, shake them around a bit and you've got Renegade's new graphic adventure, *The Flight of the Amazon Queen*.

The game has over 100 different graphic locations, 40-odd individual characters, a plot brimming with fun-filled action and a progressively difficult level of play.

The CD version features full talkie bits to live up the conditional dialogue whilst there's a double-width parallax scrolling map facility, close-ups for main character dialogues and a dynamic lighting system that goes a long way in terms of atmosphere - oh, and it's British, but only because Renegade has just been bought by Warner.

Watch for the game in November.



SURE YOU COULD DIE, BUT THAT'S LIFE.

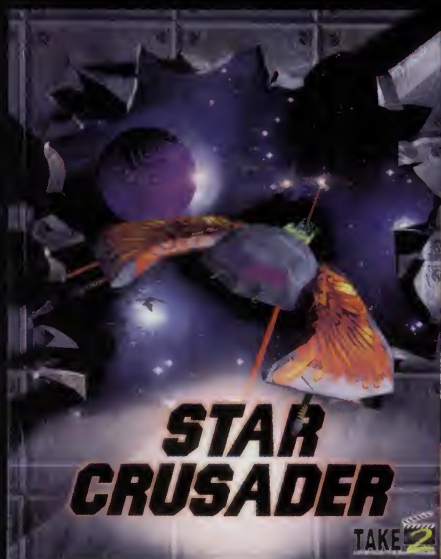
* The Gorene Empire is at war with the Alien Alliance. The ally you choose and the battle strategy you devise will determine who controls the Ascalon Rift.

* Choose your ally from either of opposing sides. Fly eleven different ships loaded with weaponry. Depart for over 100 varying missions. Then switch sides for unparalleled replayability.

* Plot strategies, orchestrate battles, fly stealth missions, and conquer territories, with full combat inside nebulas and asteroid fields.

* Riveting hyper-realistic 3-D graphics, with fully texture-mapped ships, on-the-fly translucency, Gouraud and Phong shading, and cinematic multimedia videos.

* Driving music, searing sound effects and, on the CD-ROM version, fully digitized speech delivered by professional actors.



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Bulletin



Malcolm's back – and he's a mighty bit miffed to say the least.

Kyrandia 3: Malcolm's Revenge

THE LATEST graphical romp from Westwood Studios (of *Dune II* and *Lands Of Lore* fame) is the third part in the grotesquely successful Kyrandia series featuring the "bonkers" court jester, Malcolm.

After being turned to stone in the last adventure by the sickeningly goodey-two-shoes-type bloke, Prince Brandon, Malcolm has been set free from his stony prison by a bolt of lightening and is ready to reek havoc once more on the lush land that is Kyrandia. And here's the twist – you get to play the bad guy for once! In other words, no more poncing around in green lycra tights being all nice and lovely to everyone.

Apart from that, *Kyrandia 3: Malcolm's Revenge* looks pretty much like the previous romps, with all your favourite characters, including Xanthia and, of course, Brandon.

The same intuitive interface is there, the puzzles are just as puzzling, the dialogue's just as delectable and the humour's just as, well... humorous. And you get to be real nasty. Can't be bad! *Kyrandia 3* is scheduled for release in November.

GALLUP CHARTS

So many games, so little time – these days, shopping for your PC can be a nightmare. But now, with the help of Gallup's handy household charts, you can check out what you should be playing. There's something for everyone here: full-price PC titles, budget games and even a selection of CD-ROM titles.

Top 20 Full Price Titles

1. Sim City 2000	Maxis/Mindscape
2. TIE Fighter	LucasArts
3. Frontier: Elite 3	Gametek
4. Theme Park	Electronic Arts
5. X-Wing	LucasArts/US Gold
6. Lemmings 2	Psygnosis
7. Overlord	Virgin
8. Indycar Racing	Virgin
9. TFX	Ocean
10. Doom	ID Software
11. FIFA International Soccer	Electronic Arts
12. Gabriel Knight	Sierra Online
13. Premier Manager 2	Gremlin Graphics
14. Cannon Fodder	Virgin
15. Microsoft Flight Simulator v.5	Microsoft
16. Playboy Date Book	Sierra Online
17. Brian Lara's Cricket	Audiogenic
18. Leisure Suit Larry	Sierra Online
19. Ryder Cup Golf	Ocean
20. Aces Over Europe	Sierra Online

Top 10 PC Budget Titles

1. Doom (TS)	Titanium Seal
2. Doom (MS)	Micro Star
3. Doom (GM)	Gold Medal
4. Easy To Learn Computing	Premier Collection
5. Doom Vol.2 (GM)	Gold Medal
6. Sim City Classic	Hit Squad
7. Ultima 7	Hit Squad
8. Police Quest 3	Kixx
9. Word Games For Windows	Premier Collection
10. Populous 2	Hit Squad

Top 10 CD-ROM Titles

1. Theme Park	Bullfrog/Electronic Arts
2. Encarta	Microsoft
3. Rebel Assault	US Gold
4. Sam & Max – Hit The Road	US Gold
5. The Journeyman Project	Gametek
6. Frontier: Elite 2	Gametek
7. TFX	Ocean
8. 7th Guest/Dune	Telstar Fun & Games
9. Outpost	Sierra Online
10. Ishar 2 – Messengers of Doom	Silmarils

The Editors 10 Inches

Here's something you won't have seen for a while in *PC Zone*... an editorial bit from the editor. When you've got a new, ugly git taking charge he might as well introduce himself.



ELLO, I'm John, I'm the new editor and this is the bit where I get to say pretty much whatever I want as long as it's not (really) libellous. Comments from the editor can more often than not be separated into two distinct categories. They're either a) a good way to fill that space just after the news that no-one spotted

until the last minute, or b) boring old waffle which doesn't really do anything except say how wonderful the magazine is. Either way, they rarely get the old juices flowing do they? If you really want the editorial equivalent of taking a cold shower I'm sure there are many journals which you could turn to where you can read as much boring crap as you want. This column (I hope) is going to be just a little bit different.

As a good start to this new age of creative journalism we might as well have a pop at what could well turn out to be one of the biggest commercial PC games of all time... *Doom II*. Gosh it's all jolly exciting isn't it? From October 10 you'll be able to go into any shop that sells PC games, hand over your hard-earned wonga and... and... AND... (big crescendo here) buy a game that's virtually exactly the same to the one you've already got. This isn't to say that it's not brilliant. It is. There's absolutely no denying that it's a total corker, it's just that as sequels go it offers virtually nothing new that's worth raving about. Okay, there's a new gun and some new bad guys... ooh yes, and the amusing *Wolfenstein* level, but that's pretty much it. Having played it extensively I can safely say that I was thoroughly underwhelmed by the whole experience.

Having said this though, I know for a fact that thousands of you will be buying the game when it finally goes on sale. Anything that is even vaguely connected to *Doom* is virtually a license to print money these days anyway... but this really isn't enough. *Doom II* is just a filler to keep everyone happy until the real baby hits... *Quake*. Now that really is something to go apeshit over. A totally new graphics engine, a new storyline, some vehicles to romp about in and loads of other new-fangled features. My God, it would almost be worthy of calling it a sequel wouldn't it?

By the time the next issue of *PC Zone* goes on sale, those thousands of you mentioned above will have played *Doom II* and will either totally agree with me... or think I'm an absolute wanker who hasn't got a clue what he's talking about. Either way, let me know. Let's make this a communication thing, man... if you want to be really "right on" we could even go "cyber" and you'd could send me love notes on Compu-serve. Send your carefully crafted notes to the usual address or bang it into the *PC Zone* mailbox 100142,2152.

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27

COVER DISK

We've got a fair assortment of demos for you this month, the most important of which is the Gravis Ultrasound Experience. This contains a whole host of programs, from an Interactive *Windows* demo to the latest drivers (v3.60). Just read on...

HD Installation

Master of Magic by MicroProse
(Also on the CD Issue)

This is the latest release from MicroProse and is a blend of *Civilization* and some good, old fashioned RPG's. The game is set in a fantasy land, where you are a ruler of a small kingdom (or wizardom or something like that) and you have to expand your land so that it encompasses the globe. You can recruit heroes, build up armies, hire mercenary's, kill things and there's some spells too.

HD Disk users

Make the drive containing the disk current by typing, for example:

A:

Then, at the DOS prompt, type INSTALL and then follow the instructions on screen.

If you have any problems installing the game, try typing: INSTALL-S instead.

Once you've got past this stage, you're into the game itself:

Instructions

You can use the "keys only" option, but it's a real pain, and unless you're mother was an octopus, stick to using the mouse.

The game starts off with an intro. screen that let's you choose one of two characters; either Merlin (a hippy at heart) or Kali (a total bitch). Then you're into the game itself, and if you've played *Civilization* then it will be quite familiar.

If *Civilization* is a new word to you then don a floral hat and get yourself down to the local shop and buy a copy now!

The game is a simple point-and-click God sim; cities need to be constructed using "settlers", armies built up and heroes recruited. The game has a help system built into it. Simply right mouse click over the offending region, and a full explanation of what it does pops up.

I'm not going to go into it to much, as this would spoil it - enjoy!



CD-ROM Installation

To install any of the playable demos on this months CD you should make the drive containing your CD current by typing, for example, D: Then type PCZONE, and follow the installation instructions on the screen. The programmes we've got for you this month are as follows:

The Ultrasound Experience by Gravis

This is a must for all Gravis owners and is packed full of Patches, Mod & Midi files. There's also the latest set of drivers for the Ultrasound Max (3.60), and as if that wasn't enough we've also got bundles of software from the Gravis BBS, SDK and an Interactive *Windows* demo that will work with any sound card!

The last item on the Ultrasound Experience is the Assembly '94 demos, but if you want to know more, just turn over the page and see the cute little article.

To run the Ultrasound Experience, first go into *Windows*, then double click on the File Manager icon. Once you are in this, select the CD-ROM drive and double click on the GO_ULTRA.EXE program. After that the installation program kicks in and off you go.

Cyclemania by Accolade

This is the latest gem from Accolade, and it looks like a real peach of a game. A quick history of the game is in order here. It goes like this. In Israel they get a bit pissed off with continual sunshine, gorgeous women, plagues of locusts etc., and so to liven it up they go motorbike racing. Nothing unusual about that you may think, except that this is motorbike racing with a difference. Well, three differences actually, and they are 1) they are illegal, 2) they push each other off the bikes, and 3) they race on public roads not racetracks.

So what Accolade have done is strapped a video to the front of a bike, raced around one of these courses, digitised it and then created a game that's not to dissimilar to the real thing. Well smart!

Controls

The controls are quite straightforward really. They are: left and right cursor for, er, left and right movement.

Up Cursor	- Accelerate
Down	- Cursor-Brake
M	- Map

The screen, however, is a little unusual.

You are the blue bike, but your dashboard is in front of you, too. It takes a short while to get used to, but once you've sussed it, it's a major improvement over other racing views.

Battle Bugs by Sierra Online

If you've got a phobia about insects, then you should not play this demo. If you can imagine a cross between chess and a rotting kitchen then *Battle Bugs* fits this description.

The object of the game is to get your army of bugs and beasts to crush the opposing force of spiders and maggots. Control of the game is mouse driven. To obtain a description of what each bug is capable of (or to get help) left click on the channel select on the radio.

Remember: the odds are always stacked against you, so don't go blindly charging in, guns blazing unless you want to end up a very dead insect.

Off the Boards by Shareware Selection

This month's *Off the Boards* is a compilation of the latest shareware releases. For the full info, see this month's *Off The Boards* section on page 136.

Advanced
GRAVIS
presents the
UltraSound Experience

NOV '94
**PC
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CYCLEMANIA**

- Interactive *Windows* demo (works on any sound card!)
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- New Demos from Assembly '94
- Great mod, and midi files
- Hundreds of Gravis 885 files
- SDK and much, much more...

VIDEO RACING FROM ACCOLADE

- This month's *Off the Boards*
- *Battle Bugs* from Sierra
- *Master Of Magic* from MicroProse
- And lots of other stuff too!

A must for every sound card owner!

CYCLEMANIA



Desert Storm Command



Contact Numbers

MicroProse : 0454 326 532
 Accolade : 081 788 0200
 Sierra : 0734 303 322

Information about Advanced Gravis
 can be obtained from either:

Koch Media : 0252 714 340
 Zye Technology : 0293 531 331

IMPORTANT

Some of the programs on the CD are shareware, and as such are supplied as an evaluation service to our readers. If you like the programs and intend to continue using them, you should register them with the publishers concerned. In return you will receive updated version's, extra levels and loads of other stuff. The cover disk has been virus checked. However, neither Dennis Publishing, PC Zone nor any associated companies can be deemed liable for any problems that may arise from use of this disk.

COMPETITION

This month's Disk Competition is all about those wonderful people at Gravis. The prizes are:

- 1 x 1st) Gravis Phoenix Joystick + A Gravis Ultrasound Max.
- 5 x 2nd) Gravis Ultrasound Max's
- 25 x 3rd) Gravis Game Pads

The first prize will go to the first correct entry we receive, so don't hang about. The closing date for entries will be the 1st of November 1994

Gravis Disk Competition Entry Form

Q Advanced Gravis started life from which country?

- A) Canada ☐
- B) The U.S ☐
- C) Holland ☐
- D) The U.K ☐



Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Telephone: _____

Gravis Competition CPZ411B,
 PC Zone Magazine (20),
 Dennis Publishing,
 19 Bolsover Street,
 London,
 W1P 7HJ

☐ Please tick here if you do not wish to receive future mailings.

PC
ZONE





ASSEMBLY 1994



Assembly '94 is the annual European get together of programmers, developers, whiz kids and wire heads in Northern Europe.

Basically, what these folks do is put together rolling graphical demos along with some decent tunes, so PC-game dossiers like me can sit there on a Sunday and coo "Ooh, that looks good!"

The most noticeable thing about these demos is that they are not only extraordinarily trippy, but they're also very small. There is even a section for entries less than 4k!

The event this year was held in Helsinki on the 5th to the 7th of August. Over 5000 people came for an all-night session of watching these demos.

The main sponsor of the event was Advanced Gravis, and all the demos will support the Ultra-sound Max.

The only missing entry this year was the Future Crew - a Finnish-based group of programmers who produce some top-dollar demo's. Future Crew's demos are due for release later this year.

To view some of the Assembly '94 demos, make the drive containing the CD current by typing, for example:

D:
then type:
PCZONE

Once in the menu go to the Eurodemos directory and select any one of the demo's available.

Remember that some of these demos will not run on a machine running EMS. To disable EMS go into the config.sys and REM out the line that would read something like:

```
REM Device=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE RAM
```

Apart from that you should have no problems.

All demos used Assembly '94's permission.

No CD?

IF YOU'RE sitting reading this thinking "Simian shag pots, I've only got the HD version," then fear no longer for help is at hand in the form of Miles Tudor!

Simply phone **071 917 7693** and grumble to him that your local shop has run out of CD issues. No other bugger stocks the CD issues. The dog ate my homework etc., and Miles will help sort you out. What a diamond geezer, eh?

HD DISK HELP

If your disks are being awkward, you can call the technical help line:



Matthew

0274 736990

(9am to 4pm weekdays only)

- Please note that this help line is for HD disks only, for CD's see CD help section below
- If you are advised that the disk is faulty and needs to be returned, send it in a padded envelope with two 19p stamps to:

**PC Zone Disk
Returns 17
TIB Plc
TIB House
11 Edward Street
Bradford
BD4 7BH**

CD HELP

If you have a problem installing any of the programs on the CD, then you can call:



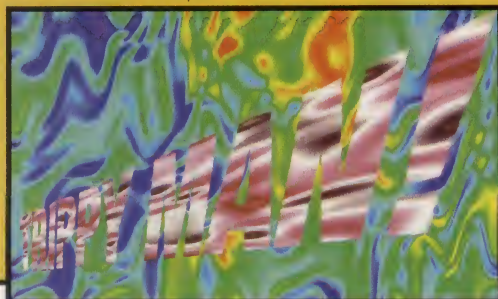
Miles Tudor

071 917 7693

**6th to 21st Oct 10am to 6pm
24th Oct to 2nd Nov 2pm to 6pm
(Except Weekends and
Wednesday Afternoons)**

If you are calling either of the help lines, please take note of the following points:

- If possible, have your computer operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If your computer isn't near a phone, note as much information as possible: system type, resolution etc., and the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you ring.



DreamWeb



~~Sunday April~~

Monday April 9



The clock keeps going round.

It won't ~~not~~ tell me the time.

Santa Claus gave a gun to me.

Let loose the puppies of war.

I died last night.



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"....BREATH TAKING....!"

"....HEART STOPPING....!"

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R

RESTRICTED

UNDER 17 REQUIRES PARENT OR ADULT SUPERVISION.

18

WARNING: THIS GAME CONTAINS SCENES OF SEX AND GRAPHIC VIOLENCE NOT SUITABLE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

Blueprint

U.S. Navy Fighters

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

PRICE: £39.99 (tba)

TELEPHONE: 0753 672088

RELEASE DATE: Out now



Chris Anderson is scared of heights. How we chortled when Electronic Arts' new flight sim arrived on his desk.

T

HE DEVELOPMENT team that brought you Chuck Yeager's *Air Combat* are working on a carrier-based flight simulator which has more bells and whistles on it than anything you've ever seen in the genre. *U.S. Navy Fighters* is the first title in EA's new *Air Combat* series of high-end PC CD-ROM flight simulations.

The storyline places you as a Navy pilot on board the aircraft carrier *Eisenhower*. Radical nationalist forces have seen off Boris Yeltsin and are now attempting to take control of Russian areas in neighbouring republics. The United States, in keeping with their policy of minding everybody's business but their own, agree to protect Ukraine, and the *Eisenhower* is sent off to the Black Sea. It's up to you then, to repel the Russian invasion using all the aircraft in your carrier wing and bring law and order to this unruly lot. Campaign is played out over 50 missions, with mission-types varying from combat air patrols, escort missions, anti-ship and ant-tank strikes, close air support, suppression of enemy defenses, and more besides. In addition to this, there are another 50 missions to get through in Single Mission mode.

Breaking the sound barrier

The game was developed exclusively for CD, and the developers have taken full advantage of the massive data storage capacity of the platform to bring flight sim fans the closest thing they've ever had to an aerial multimedia experience. *U.S. Navy Fighters* uses eight-track digital sound effects to recreate sonic booms, crackling fire, ricocheting canon shells, and lots of other fun-filled battle sounds. The game also uses digitised speech extensively to enhance the atmosphere and add to the realism. Players will hear radio transmissions from shouting wingmen, radar intercept officers, and AWAC's



(Left) The main options screen where you'll find, er, lots of options, surprisingly enough.



(Below) The dreaded carrier landing scenario.

Q U A R A N T I N E



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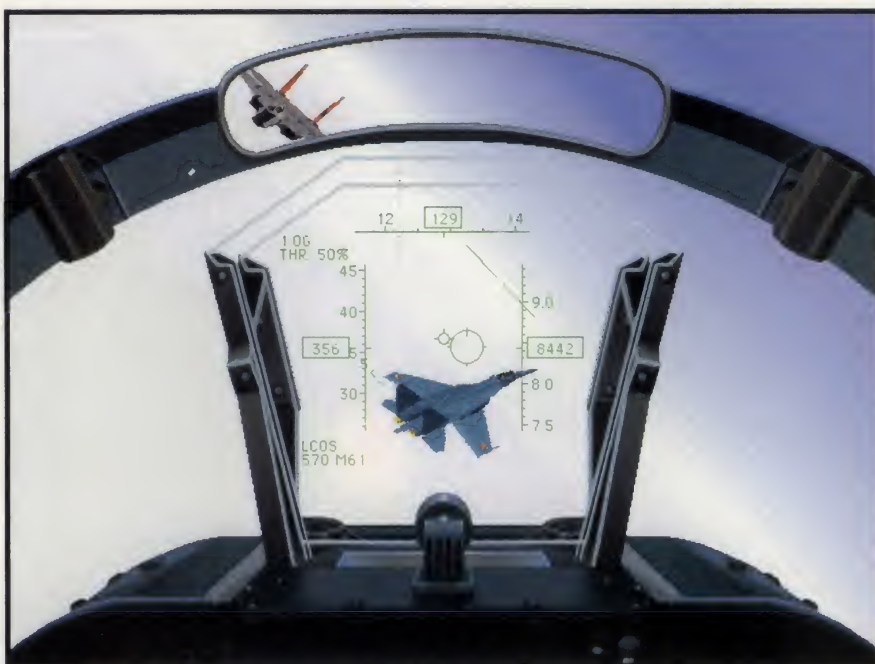
GAMETEK

GAMETEK (UK) LIMITED, 5 Bath Road, Slough, Berks, SL1 3UA



aircraft who will update the pilot as the battle situation changes, calling out the range and bearing of enemy aircraft and incoming missiles.

The graphics, as you can see for very yourselves from the screen shots, are absolutely stunning. All the aircraft, ships and vehicles, are fully texture mapped. Bit-mapped and digitised animations are also fully utilized to create a variety of special effects. These effects include animated catapult officers directing aircraft on the carrier deck, multiple explosion effects digitised from actual video, and ejection



Behind you!

One incredibly smart feature in *U.S. Navy Fighters*, and an absolute first for flight simulations, is the ability to spot enemy planes and missiles in your rear view mirrors. Apart from being useful for taking a quick check on where the bandits are, it also has the added attraction of looking really neat.

There's also a Track View which simulates the pilot's head rotation. In other words, your view shifts around the cockpit allowing you to keep sight of the enemy target. You still stay in control of the plane while this is going on, giving you a chance to get the enemy target back in your sights. Other features include "pop-up" windows of all the cockpit displays, flight envelopes, and target views.

The choice of aircraft in *U.S. Navy Fighter* includes the F-14 Tomcat, F/A-18 Hornet, and the proposed naval version of the F-22 Lightning. Players will also have a chance to fly the classic Su-27 Flanker, which is the Russian Navy's powerful fourth-generation fighter-bomber.

Gratuitous violence galore

As far as the actual gameplay is concerned this game will probably appeal more to

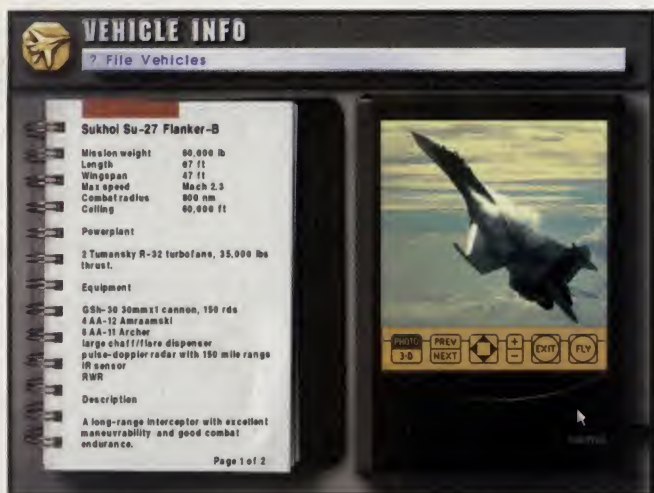
You can see the enemy in your wing mirror. Now is that smart or what?

action fans than players who are looking for ultra realism, as was the case with the original Chuck Yeager game. Electronic Arts' Product Manager, Simon Etchells, says that the development team took a good, close look at the other flight simulations on the market to see which appealed most to the average armchair pilot. They reached the conclusion that people wanted superb, fast graphics and lots of enemy planes to blow to pieces. Simon also modestly opined that the graphics in *U.S. Navy Fighters* are superior to most modern flight sims, and that's including EA's own visual extravaganza, *Strike Commander*.

In terms of game style, the general feel is very similar (again) to the original Chuck Yeager game. In fact, *U.S. Navy Fighters* is unofficially a sequel to the original game. The main differences between the two, apart from the obvious cosmetic improvements, are the inclusion of a campaign option (a feature which was sadly missing from the original game) and a new mission designer. Players are now able to edit the single missions at a simple level, selecting the amount of planes etc., or they can choose to play at a complex level, where they can determine weather conditions, waypoints and so on.

It's obvious that the development team have paid meticulous attention to detail for every feature of this game. The graphics look amazing, the sound effects are superb, and there's enormous variety in the mission types. *U.S. Navy Fighters* could be the game that inspires the major software houses to produce CD-ROM only flight sims. EA will be paving the way with each release of the Air Combat series. We can only hope that this game lives up to expectations. If it does, we'll probably be witnessing an entirely new generation of flight sims.

U.S. Navy Fighters will be released on PC CD-ROM only at the end of October. **Z**



Get the specs on your planes before sending them to their doom.


parachute sequences. Game environment graphics include features such as texture-mapped water, sky, coastlines, roads, bridges, trees and cities. Realism is further increased with the inclusion of atmospheric hazing, time of day and weather effects.

Hardware Nightmare

As always is the case with technological advancements, a price has to be paid for the benefits they bring. Unfortunately, it's you, the punters, who always get the brunt of it. If you're the proud owner of a 486SX machine, or anything with a lower specification, skip this section or you're bound to get completely pissed off. At this stage of its development, *U.S. Navy Fighters* requires at least a 486DX before it will run, but according to Electronic Arts, by the time of its release, it will probably need a 486DX2 66 as a *minimum* requirement. Okay, this now familiar elitist approach by software houses is a complete pain in the arse, but whether you like it or not, if you want to play the best games, you're going to need the best hardware to run them.

You get to fly loads of different planes in this game, you know. You select 'em here.





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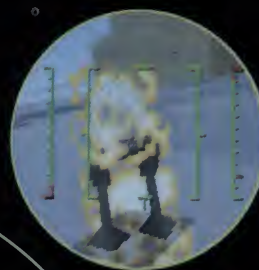


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Blueprint

Dawn Patrol

PUBLISHER: Empire

PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 081 343 7337

RELEASE DATE: October '94



Tally-ho, pip-pip, etc., etc. **John Davison** dons his silly leather hat with the earflaps and a pair of steamed up goggles to look at the latest WWI flight sim developed by Rowan Software.

UNTIL JUST a few months ago, you would have been forgiven for thinking that Rowan Software had completely disappeared. After developing a number of reasonably well-received flight sims a few years ago, including *Reach For The Skies* and the extremely popular *Flight Of The Intruder*, the company seemed to evaporate.

Due partly to the Maxwell Group going belly up and taking Mirrorsoft with it (the software house responsible for the majority of Rowan's games) however, the enforced quiet patch that the team was subjected to was far from wasted. Having developed an astounding 3D graphics engine which was employed to great effect in *Overlord* (recently released through Virgin), the team is now busy putting the finishing touches to *Dawn Patrol* for Empire.

✠ The best since Red Baron?

So what's so special about this one then? Well, for a start it's a WWI combat sim – and that's something that you don't see very often. To be honest, the last one we came across that was worthy of note was the Sierra/Dynamix thingy, *Red Baron*. Although not particularly impressive visually, the game managed to win the hearts of many flight sim buffs by presenting the air wars of the early 1900s in a reasonably realistic manner. Since then, all games developers seem to have become obsessed with long-range missiles, laser-guided thingummies and lots of high



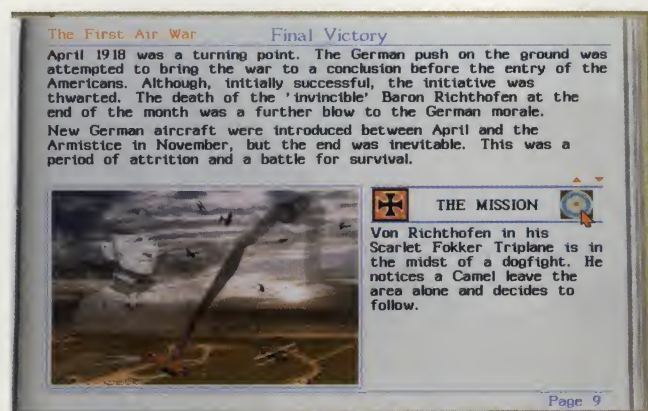
(Above) There is a huge variety of aircraft on offer with a total of 15 planes.

technology. There's nothing quite like getting in close for a real dogfight, though. Slamming your kite around the sky with only your wits and a crappy old machine gun to defend yourself with is far more intense than anything a high-speed jet fighter/bomber can offer.

The team up at Rowan are very proud of the fact that *Dawn Patrol* is actually a very different kind of flight sim. Dubbed as a "true" flight simulation that places the emphasis firmly on "seat of the pants" flying, you can rest assured that this is a product where the "feel" of the planes is

just as important as the fancy graphics and polygon manipulation bits. This isn't to say that there aren't all kinds of fancy techniques used, though... *Dawn Patrol* has as much guru shading and texture-mapping as any self-respecting modern combat sim. Added to this it has full SVGA graphics support for all you show-offs out there with bloody great ninja PCs. If you take a look at the screen shots across these finely crafted pages, I'm sure you'll agree that it looks nothing short of amazing. If you see the thing running on something like a P5-60 with a fast SVGA card, you'll never want to

(Below) The whole game is presented very much as a form of book where you play out the different chapters. (Bottom right) The external views really show off the level of detail in all of the plane models.





go back to VGA ever again... it looks that good. Still, bearing in mind that purchasing such a system would help you run up a credit card bill somewhere in the region of the national debt of a small third-world country, I suppose you're only likely to see the game running like this at shows and in shops.

The guts of the game

The basic idea behind *Dawn Patrol* is actually as much like an RPG as it is a flight simulation. Put together as a kind of interactive book, you are presented with



It's not just the good guys that you get to play here... you can jump in some fairly hefty German kit as well.

100 different scenarios based on events that really happened during World War I. You can go back and fly both historical and fictional sorties which cover the escapades of Baron von Richthofen, Voss, Ball, Immelman and Rickenbacher and any appropriate manoeuvres that this bunch managed to dream up.

In all there are 15 different aircraft for you to try your hand at and, although we're informed by the chaps at Rowan that the


(Below) There are some truly spectacular air wars in the game with an awful lot of hardware flying about.



flight models aren't quite spot on (though they do seem very realistic... wings falling off when you go 150mph and so forth), the actual 3D models of the vehicles themselves are extremely accurate. All the famous bits of kit - from the Fokker Triplane to the SPAD 7, Eindecker and Biggles' favourite, the Sopwith Camel - are present and look absolutely fabulous.

When do we get to see it?

When we trundled all the way up to Run-corn (somewhere just north of nowhere it seems) the game was looking very polished indeed: we were told that there were only a few more tweaks to be done to the code before it would be ready. All the graphics are virtually finished and the programmers are currently slotting in the music (which is a particularly dramatic and moody rendition of Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italian*, if anyone out there's interested) and the last few bits and bobs.

All being well we won't have to wait too long to play *Dawn Patrol*: it should hit the shops in November, with an enhanced CD-ROM version (containing all sorts of multi-media video footage and music etc.) appearing soon afterwards. 

(Left) As with *Overlord*, Rowan has chosen to present a fair bit of information on all the in-game screens so that you know pretty much where you are at all times.

ROD HYDE - MANAGING DIRECTOR, ROWAN SOFTWARE

The *Dawn Patrol* project has been the result of a lot of work put in by quite a large programming team. We spoke to Rod Hyde, MD of Rowan Software about the project and about the team's games in general...

“ We like to produce pre-jet sims for a couple of reasons. First of all, the aircraft are slower. This means that aircraft stay in combat with each other for much longer. We get many aircraft in view at the same time and the combat is far more exciting.

Secondly, there are no missiles. This again makes flight more interesting. Air-to-air combat in modern jet sims seems to consist of simply pressing a button when a lock light appears on the HUD and that's it. This kind of kill is fun to begin with, but it soon loses its appeal. On the other hand, tearing after someone in a biplane where you're in close and using nothing but a machine gun is much more enjoyable.

As far as research went we have tried to use a lot of information to provide something that is as historically accurate as possible. We read an awful lot of books, viewed many films and gathered photographs from the Smithsonian library in Washington. There are over 30 stills used in the game from this source and these were culled from nearly half a million photos which were supplied on six 12 inch laser discs!

As far as future projects go we have two more that are nearing completion. We have another pre-jet sim which we are developing for Mindscape and a futuristic sim based on the F-22 and the A-X which is called *Rapid Response* for MicroProse. At the moment the titles themselves aren't confirmed and there's a distinct possibility that MicroProse may want to change the name of *Rapid* to *Navy Strike* before they release it.

We have been trying out a number of different software houses to distribute our products... after our experiences with Mirrorsoft we really don't want to have all our eggs in one basket. Placing *Overlord* with Virgin was good... the clout of a massive corporation is nice to have, but for *Dawn Patrol* we wanted to see what a much smaller software house could offer us and the deal with Empire has been working out very nicely.

”

Blueprint

NASCAR Racing

PUBLISHER: Virgin Interactive

PRICE: £49.99 (CD)

TELEPHONE: 081 960 2255

RELEASE DATE: November

Indycar Racing was a bloody brilliant game and the sequel looks to be even better.

John Davison checks out the PC game that puts the new super consoles to shame.



IF YOU'VE been paying attention to the riotous goings on in the video-game industry at the moment you'll no doubt be aware that we're about to be inundated with the "second coming" of the games console. Having flogged the 16-bit bandwagon to death it seems that virtually every major consumer electronics firm is now trying to produce a box that will shift 37 squillion

polygons every second and reproduce arcade games absolutely perfectly whilst at the same time being a pretentious "multi-media" system.

One of the obligatory bores that all of these boxes has to have on the software front is a polygon-based racing game that looks dead flash... none of your dull, plain, single-colour polygons like in *Virtua Racing*, oh no, to be a member of the new gang you need a fully texture-mapped, light-sourced, guru-shaded polygon thing like that found in *Daytona* or *Ridge Racer*. Have a quick skim through the console press at the moment



Although it looks like the flash new arcade racers, NASCAR is very much a simulation and can be played at different levels... just like its older brother, *Indycar*. You can let the computer control virtually everything and play it as a game, or you can stay in control of everything yourself and see just how hard it is to control a 680bhp car.

and you will see'em everywhere accompanied by comments referring to "revolutionary new graphics" and the such like.

You don't need a super console

To be honest, you have to feel sorry for the trend-following console mob. If you've got a PC, you can play flash polygon-based games already, and one of the best ones ever is *Indycar Racing* from Papyrus. It's got lovely texture-mapped graphics, polygons a-plenty and it's as fast as a really fast thing that has an extra-special reason to move particularly fast. And now it's got a sequel... the even flashier *NASCAR Racing*. Although being touted as a serious racing simulation, it's really a direct response to *Ridge Racer* in the arcades, and not only does it

manage to look bloody marvellous, it cocks a snook and generally goes "nah, nah, na, nah, nah" to the likes of the games being produced for the Sony Play-

station, 3DO and Sega Saturn.

I can't really remember there ever being a stock-car racing game for the PC before... not a serious one, anyway. For those of you that don't know much about the sport, or haven't seen the bloody awful film with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, it's one of America's largest spectator sports and involves 3,500lb, 680bhp cars screaming round and round in a circle at speeds of around 200mph. If the sheer power of the cars isn't reason enough to find the sport exhilarating, then the fact that they spend most of the time a few inches away from each other is more than enough to get all excited. Crashes are pretty common place in stock-car racing and they are always spectacular.

Know-it-all's

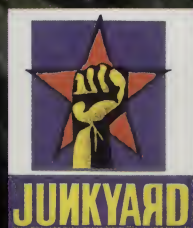
When *Indycar Racing* was released it was widely acknowledged that the team at Papyrus knew pretty much what they were doing when it came to simulating the



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Computer Game Review

WARNING

Game features scenes of graphic violence.
If you feel you may be offended, please
do not purchase.



As with *Indycar Racing* the game makes extensive use of texture-mapped polygons and gives the whole thing an exceptionally realistic look

performance of a high-powered racing car. NASCAR again shows that they have got things well and truly sorted out... but we were surprised to find that this is a project that's been developed totally from scratch.

If you look at the screen shots I'm sure you'll agree that the game looks like it's derived from the same graphics system used in *Indycar*. It just seems to have the same "look" right? Well, we're assured that to enhance the performance of the 3D engine the development team went back to the drawing board and totally reworked the entire game engine. The result is a super-efficient, super-speedy, super thing that is

not only capable of shifting fully texture-mapped, VGA resolution polygons around, but also SVGA graphics as well. Yep, if you've got a ninja-bastard PC with all the trimmings this new game can be presented to you in glorious high-res, which more than matches the graphics of *Ridge Racer* or *Daytona*.

Aside from the visual aspect, Papyrus has also totally reworked its artificial intelligence system for the control of the computer vehicles, as well as all of the physics algorithm thingies for the way the cars

react in different places on the tracks with different tyre, spoiler, engine and suspension set-ups. What this all results in is something which is equally as much a simulation as it is a racing "game".

Round and round

Accurate representations of tracks is something we can pretty much take for granted

in PC racing games now. After MicroProse released *Formula One Grand Prix* a couple of years ago, anyone that resorted to the crap "driving through an empty field and calling it Monaco" school of track design was viciously harangued by all and sundry. The thing is that most of the stock-car tracks of the world are just extremely boring ovals, so how can you make a whole bunch of them (in this case, all nine) any different? Who knows? But Papyrus is insistent that all of the tracks are distinctly different and totally faithful to the real thing due to the fact that they have used the original blueprints of all the tracks simulated.

"Crashes are pretty common place in stock car racing and they're always spectacular."

Okay, so that's all of the NASCAR racing specific stuff out of the way, but what about all of the good stuff that was in *Indycar* which made it such a bloody excellent game? Yes, the physics and the gameplay

and the graphics were all spot on, but had lots of groovy features as well. Are these in NASCAR too? Thankfully, yes. If, like me, you had as much fun playing around with the extensive replay feature on *Indycar* you'll be pleased to know that it is also implemented here. A full race can be "recorded" and then played back from lots of different angles to produce a very "televsual" look to the whole thing. Smart.

At the moment it's not clear whether Virgin is intending to lead with the CD-ROM or the floppy version of the product, although it would seem that both versions will be very similar in terms of spec.

It is worth noting though that the full SVGA version will probably only be implemented on the CD version of the game and it will definitely need a whopping 8MB of RAM to run, whereas the VGA version will only need a meagre 4MB. **Z**



THE OLD AND THE NEW



When you see both of the Papyrus racing games side by side (above is *Indycar Racing*, right is *Nascar Racing*) it's obvious that they come from the same stable. The quality of the polygon graphics is superb in both, and the use of texture maps to make the cars look as authentic as possible seems to work wonderfully. Papyrus calls its system the "3D Super Texture" engine, and jolly fine it is to. When *NASCAR* is released in November it will be the first SVGA texture-mapped polygon racing game on the market. You'll need a hyper-speed PC to run it, but believe us when we say it looks stunning.



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Blueprint

Ecstatica

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis

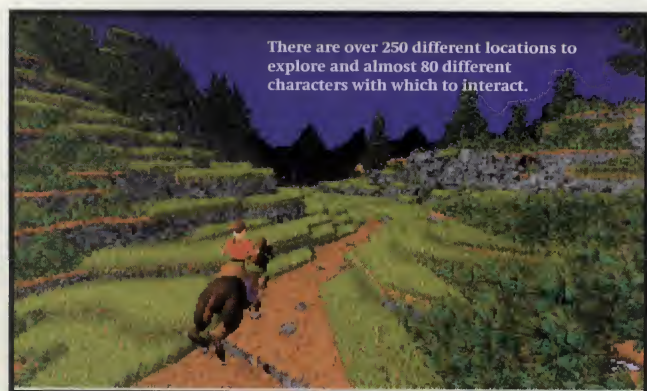
PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 051 709 5755

RELEASE DATE: November

The new 3D action adventure from Psygnosis features a superbly detailed and shaded player environment, brilliantly animated characters and a heroine with extremely round buttocks.

Jeremy Wells reports back on the strange world of werewolves, ellipsoids and pert pixels.



The Plot...

The player arrives by chance at a deserted village in the middle of nowhere in search of water. As he or she (you can choose whether you want to play the part of a male or female character) enters the village you are chased by werewolves, pestered by strange pixie-like creatures wielding swords, and then tortured. After being left for dead, the player must escape and explore the village, collecting various clues as to what you must do, on your way. In other words, it's all pretty familiar to anyone who's ever been on a Club 18-30 holiday in Tenerife.

It soon unfolds that the village has been taken over by a demon who was freed by a young girl dabbling in black magic. The girl has since been imprisoned by the demon and now lies in a troubled sleep in the dungeons beneath the castle. The demon has taken over her mind and through it gained the power to control the village. Her nightmares have become reality and now haunt the village in the shape of grotesque monsters. You, the player, must overpower the monsters, complete various tasks, defeat the demon and rescue the girl.



T

HE FIRST thing you notice about *Ecstatica*, apart from the beautifully rolling back grounds, the amazingly animated characters and the overwhelming spooky atmosphere, is the sense of complete control you have over your character. Forget VR for a moment and don't even think about digitised actors. This is about as close as you are going to get to "living" in a computer-generated environment and what's more, it doesn't rely on cutting-edge technology to do the business. It's all down to good old-fashioned programming skills, a lot of midnight oil and the desire to get things just right.

Alone with Ecstatica

The games engine behind *Ecstatica* was developed by Andrew Spencer and has taken almost five years to perfect. Unlike the *Alone* series, it uses ellipsoid technology to

generate detailed and realistic characters that actually move and act like living creatures and not squared-off polygons. As a result the characters appear less square and more rounded, allowing for greater ease of movement. The characters, which are made up from anything between 60 and 80 individual polygons, were drawn directly onto the PC under the expert eye of animator Alain Mandron who has previously worked on the animated feature film *Fievel Goes West*. To make the characters appear more realistic, Alain has applied the experience gained through working with traditional animation and ensured that they are never static but always moving to give the impression of a real-life, real-time player environment. All the characters (and there will be around 80 in all) will carry on living in their own world unless the player interacts with them directly or indirectly. Similarly, if something is dropped by the player at a certain location it will remain there, doors





The game is set within a fully explorable 3D landscape with real-time interaction which gives the game a very open feel. Character control is first class. You can run, jump, creep, punch and thump. When you pick something up you see it in your hand and when you drop it it's there when you get back.



will remain unlocked if opened by the player, whilst anything the player does to affect his or her environment will appear in the same location and state when the player returns, unless, that is, another character has picked it up or hidden it.

Creepin', crawlin' characters

Character movement is controlled by the cursor keys and is surprisingly smooth and very fluid. We had the unfinished game running on a 486sx25 and it coped quite

admirably, which is no mean feat when you consider the amount of pixels it's throwing around. On a faster machine it would, of course, be a lot smoother, but the game will definitely be playable on lower-end machines, which is testament in itself to the programming team.

The gaming environment is quite vast and there will be over 250 different animated scenes in the game to explore and loads of different camera angles from which to view the action. As well as moving your character around, you can run, jump, crawl and even tip-toe to avoid being seen or heard by other characters. When it comes to fisticuffs, you can opt for a simple right or left hook, or a swooping lunge. You can also pick up weapons to defend yourself, mix up spells that allow you to cast fireballs, and even pick up other dead characters to hit opponents with!

Although the game doesn't have an energy bar to indicate the strength of your character, he/she (you choose which sex) will become sluggish and move much slower as he/she becomes weaker. Strength will only be replenished if the player rests, finds nourishment, a healing potion or a spell.

A world of difference

Rather than brain-taxing puzzles, the game has a fairly linear chain of events that must be completed in order to progress through the game. The idea being that the player always has a pretty good idea of what he should be trying to do, rather than getting stuck on a single puzzle with no clues and no where else to go. Consequently, the game is immediately very accessible as the player can simply wander around the village interacting with the other characters until they get to know the structure of the game. Because the game is set within a fully-explorable 3D landscape with real-time interaction, the player is free to do as he or she pleases, which gives the game a very open feel. In fact, the more you play it, the more drawn into it you become as you discover hidden rooms, dust-covered spell books and learn to hide from the dreaded werewolf rather than foolishly stand and fight it only to be splattered against the wall or hung upside-down and tortured.

If anything is going to challenge the already established *Alone* series, then this is it. It's got plot, it looks fantastic and it just oozes personality and depth. Let's hope it's worth the wait. ■

Alone no longer alone

When *Alone In The Dark* was released by French software giants Infogrames, it set a new precedent for 3D graphical adventure games on the PC. People marvelled at the massive player environment, the polygon-generated characters and the reach out and touch feel of the game.

When *Alone 2* was released, jaws could once again be heard dropping about the land. The sequel was far superior in terms of graphics and atmosphere, with its swirling camera angles and greater characterisation, and even though some people claimed that it was too difficult, *Alone 2* again set the standard by which all other games of this genre were judged. Not that there were many, mind. The *Alone In The Dark* series was in many respects so ahead of its time that other software developers have only now started to release similar styled products. *Alone 3* is due for release before Christmas and promises to be the best *Alone* to date, with even better graphics, animations and innovative camera views. But this time it won't be alone. Other games developers have been keen to grab a piece of the 3D adventure action before the end of the year. Most notably are EA's *Bioforge* and *Little Big Adventure*, both of which have been "in development" for over three years, are due for a pre-Christmas release, and look pretty impressive in the graphics and gameplay departments. Will *Alone 3* retain its crown or will a new pretender take the honours? Wait and see.



Alone 2 CD - keeping up appearances. Alone 3 is due early next year and promises to be the best yet



LBA - pretty graphics and plenty of gameplay.



Bioforge uses 3D digitised characters and sets.

You get to choose the sex of your hero. Both have rather strange hairstyles, favour very tight clothing and have extremely pert buttocks. Some of the monsters, such as the werewolf (above) are very tough. You can stand and fight, or if things get a little sticky, turn and run.

Blueprint

Dark Forces

PUBLISHER: LucasArts

PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 081 960 2255

RELEASE DATE: November

System Shock and Doom II are already here, but is Dark Forces going to be the 3D blast'em-up that really dumps on everything else from a great height?

John Davison takes an early look....



DOOM is good. Let's not piss about here, it's one of the few fundamental truths... the sky is blue, grass is invariably green, bears do indeed shit in the woods and *Doom* is bloody excellent. Any software house or development team that is intending to pitch a product against *Doom* is either a) completely and utterly nuts, or b) confident that it can produce something better. Whilst we've seen a number of complete arses that fit into category a), it's not until now that we can say anyone has had a stab at category b). Enter LucasArts Entertainment... purveyor of PC games of ridiculously high quality and the firm responsible for this game, *Dark Forces*. If you love *Doom* and have even the remotest soft spot for *Star Wars* (so we're talking about roughly 99 per cent of the PC games playing population now) you are going to soil your pants when you get a load of this game.

It may sound a bit sad, but I'm making the presumption here that pretty much everyone is a big fan of *Star Wars*. There are few films in history which deserve complete anorak-head fans, but if anything is deserving then Mr Lucas' trilogy is more than worthy. As with previous LucasArts games which are based on the glorious work, *Dark Forces* doesn't follow any particular film script, it simply employs all of the facts and bits of data which have been collated over the past 16 years. Luke, Leia, Han, Chewie et al don't make an appearance at all... you are simply made aware that you are knocking around at about the same time as them.

Doom doomed?

Playing the role of an elite special agent on the Rebel Alliance's covert intelligence team, your initial mission is to infiltrate an



Graphically, *Dark Forces* may look very similar to *Doom* from these stills, but it offers more freedom... very much what we're expecting from *Quake*, in fact.



Imperial Star Destroyer and steal the plans for the Death Star. Once this is complete, though, the game then plunges you into a host of totally new scenarios involving bits of Imperial equipment which have only been dreamt up for the likes of the tabletop RPG's. You'll find yourself pitched against a host of new Stormtroopers, as well as a number of super-human adversaries which are all strong in the dark side

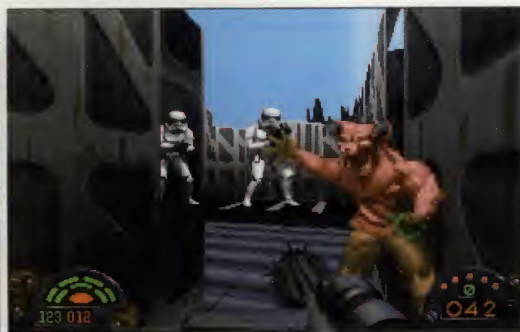
of the force.

The missions, of which there are 12, will take you from the corridors of the Star Destroyer, to the Imperial garrisons on faraway planets, the dark and rocky underground canyons of the Empire's hidden bases, and finally you will be freeing prisoners from cell blocks in an underground penitentiary whilst doing battle with Admiral Mohc's special army of Darktroopers. It's all utterly gripping stuff, and from what we've seen so far it is an absolutely enormous game... way bigger than a registered copy of *Doom* (oops, I've gone and said the "d" word again).

Okay, so the story line is pretty shit-hot, but if you were really proficient with a decent bunch of *Doom* editors you could generate something like this anyway... Is *Dark Forces* any better than this? Well, to be honest, and without shouting about the fact too much... YES, YES, YES. Why? For a start, the 3D engine is

a real grade-A product all on its own. As well as silky smooth, full 360-degree movement within the environment, you also have an *Underworld/System Shock*-style interface, which allows you to look both up and down at any time to interact with objects on either the floor or high up on the walls. Beyond this (*System Shock*-style again) you can make your character jump, duck and general skulk about in a "covert agent"





(Left) Unlike Doom, the enemy characters are far more detailed, even when they are viewed close up.



(Above) The guns all look just like those out of the film and the noises are just like you'd expect.

kind of a way, whilst wandering through the texture-mapped, guru-shaded, morphed and generally wonderful looking scenery.

Aurally the game takes full advantage of the CD medium by offering a dramatic adaptation of the *Star Wars* score, as well as full speech and digitised sound effects taken from the LucasArts' library of *Star Wars*-sy sounds.

The mutt's nuts

With so many astounding games on the verge of release, it would appear that this Christmas is going to see an all-out war on the PC games front. With *Doom II* ready to hit the streets in October (see our review on page 60) and *System Shock* pretty much out there already, there is a lot going on in the

3D-action/adventure arena at the moment.

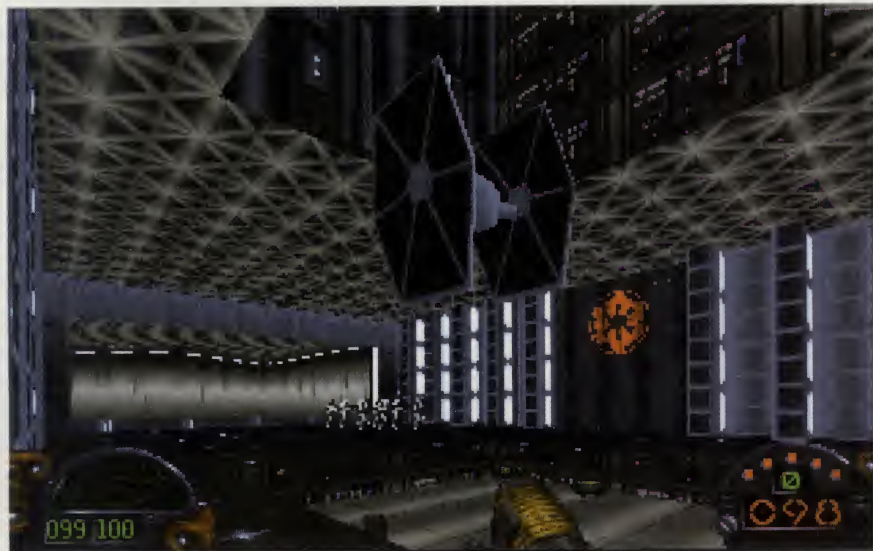
Although I'm loathe to pass judgements in preview-style articles, it has to be said that *Dark Forces* looks to have the potential to be relationship-wreckingly good. If you are not attached... find yourself a partner who loves *Star Wars* so that he/she won't get upset when you spend every waking hour playing this damn game. If you are already

attached, then you have got just over a month in which to indoctrinate them with *Star Wars*. Make him/her watch the videos, play *X-Wing* a lot and leave all of the numerous novels lying around all over the place. Failing this... just accept that some things were never meant to be.

Watch for *Dark Forces* in November and a review very soon in *PC Zone*. **Z**



(Above left) One of the real beauties about *Dark Forces* is that many of the polygon objects move around. Ships fly in and out of docking bays and you can even watch them out of the windows.



(Left) The TIE Fighters seen here look remarkably similar to the polygon craft which zipped about in LucasArts' previous title, *TIE Fighter*, don't they?

Blueprint

Little Big Adventure

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts

PRICE: Tba

TELEPHONE: 0753 549442

RELEASE DATE: November

They eat a lot of garlic, they drive very fast and they (supposedly) make the best lovers in the world, and if the new release from French developers, Adeline, is anything to go by, they're still leaders of the pack when it comes to producing 3D animated adventures.



Jeremy Wells salivates over the new Gouraud shaded, polygoned, SVGA-rendered spectacular from across the channel.

Twinkel



A Quetch



A Rabibunny



(Below) A furtive Twinkel waits to leap aboard a beautifully animated rubbish truck.

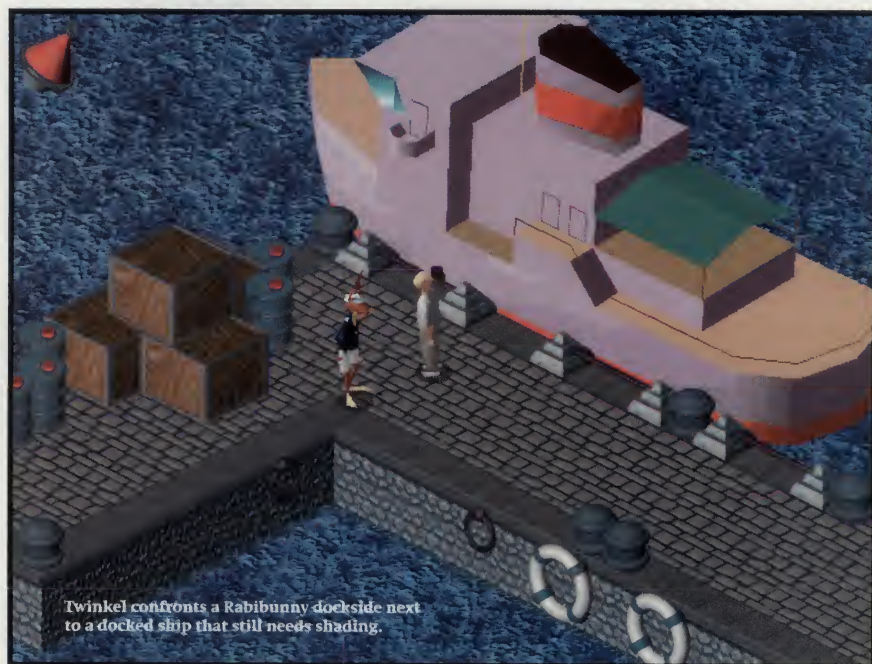


EVERYTHING AND everyone seems to be going 3D at the moment, and what's more, the French seem to be behind most of it.

Whilst the buzz word on everyone's lips in the US right now seems to be "interactive movie", the French are pursuing what they undoubtedly do best: developing games with technically outstanding graphics, witty scenarios and characters that are always larger than life. With *Alone In The Dark 3*, *Ecstasia* and *Little Big Adventure* (LBA) all due for release in the next couple of months, this Christmas could quite easily be dubbed "The Battle of the Polygons" as the big three fight it out, leaving the French developers laughing all the way to *le banque* with no expensive Hollywood fees to pay and an almost guaranteed buying public in search of gameplay rather than big names.

Little, big and lookin' good

LBA quite simply oozes style and looks utterly fantastique. The developers (who, incidentally, were responsible for the first *Alone In The Dark* game) have spent ages getting the look and feel of the game as polished as possible, combining both Gouraud-shaded polygon characters and Super VGA-rendered backgrounds to give the game a slick, fast-paced and overall realistic appearance. The plot, however, is



Twinkel confronts a Rabibunny dockside next to a docked ship that still needs shading.

pretty standard, comic-book stuff and basically follows the route of "chosen bloke must defeat nasty bloke and save the world", or for those of you who want the full story: a dastardly, power-crazed nutter called Dr FunFrock has conquered your planet and removed all the inhabitants to the southern hemisphere. You play a character called Twinkel who has been imprisoned by Dr FunFrock for spreading the legend of Sendell, a deity whom your people believe will one day select a mortal to rid the planet of the evil dictatorship. One night, whilst asleep in your cell, Sendell comes to you in a dream and tells you that you are the chosen one. You must escape from prison, resume your kidnapped girlfriend and save the world.

Magical manipulation

In a game such as this, animation is all, and if it's really special, everything is animated. LBA promises to be very special and it's not even finished yet. However, what really sets LBA apart from the rest is the way the game operates. The animation is driven by a sophisticated "Multi-Task Life

Engine" that introduces an element of "fuzzy logic" into what is usually, by its very nature, a rather linear genre. It's what every programmer has been trying to achieve for years, and it finally looks as though Adeline have cracked it. To put it simply, each character obeys a series of orders given by the encoders. These orders may concern reactions to dialogue, Twinkel's behaviour, the object that Twinkel possesses, the other characters that have confronted him etc., and as each character, enemy and object is managed and controlled by means of a very detailed life sheet, the various parameters used allow an infinite number of behaviour patterns, so that attitudes and especially the reactions of the characters encountered are extremely realistic. What you end up with are characters that live, breath and act almost independently.

Almost A1 AI

And it doesn't end there. You can also set the behavioural mode of Twinkel to either "normal", "aggressive", "athletic" or "furtive" and it does genuinely affect the way





The game uses beautifully animated "flick" files to illustrate the progression of the story.

your character acts in various situations, thereby opening up a massive new dimension in gameplay. For example, if Twinkel enters a room that is being patrolled by a guard in "normal" mode, or if Twinkle is running, the guard will spot him, fire at him and a fight will ensue. If, however, Twinkel enters the room furtively on tiptoe he will not make any noise (the noise of his footsteps will actually disappear on the soundtrack) and if he keeps to the shadows and out of the guard's view he will be able to sneak past the guard without being noticed at all.


What this all means in terms of gameplay is an almost infinite gaming environment inhabited by characters that "live" and interact with the player and each other in a virtually unrestricted fashion. They will perform their tasks whatever happens, but in doing so they adapt to events going on around them. For example, if there is an obstacle in their way they will go round it instead of remaining blocked and walking on the spot. Unlike other games where the characters follow a set routine, the movements of LBA's characters are managed using fuzzy logic when they move between two points, which means they take a different route each time.

There's more?

Yep! Apart from being *tres formidable* in the gameplay department, LBA is very easy to use and character control is positively top notch thanks to a minimalist key control approach. Adeline have taken great care to ensure that the character is easy to manipulate, both in the different actions Twinkel performs and in the choice of objects to use. For example, when you pick up an

object you must put it in your inventory in order to use it. After this, the object is used as required automatically, since it is in Twinkel's inventory for the rest of the game and as he knows how and when to use it. Similarly, the choices of answers in the dialogues have been kept very basic to keep things as simple as possible. However, as the life engine enables characters to know which objects Twinkel possesses, who he has spoken to and how far into the adventure the player has progressed, there is always the possibility of several different dialogues for the same situation depending on how the player has been playing the game.

Little Big Adventure also reaches the parts other games cannot reach in terms of weapons and player combat that's fast, realistic and very fluid. There are a number of different weapons to be found as well as various Gouraud-shaded vehicles that Twinkel can "borrow" to get around more quickly. Oh, and it almost goes without saying that it's gonna be big. Quite huge in fact, with 12 immense chapters, over 40 environments (each containing around 50 buildings) and over six different races to interact with. So big in fact that it will take around ten hours to finish and that's if you only perform the most essential tasks!

With its positively groundbreaking, non-linear "life-engine", superb animation, realistic combat sequences and taxing puzzles, Little Big Adventure certainly looks set to cause a stir when it is released in November, ensuring that when it comes to 3D isometric games, nobody does it better than the French. 

You can even set the mode of your character for absolute control. For example, when in "athletic" mode Twinkel will do warm up exercises and run up and down on the spot when waiting for a command.



Blueprint

Discworld

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis

PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 051 709 5755

RELEASE DATE: November

An avaricious but inept wizard, a naive tourist whose luggage moves on hundreds of dear little legs, dragons who only exist if you believe in them, and, of course, the edge of the world. *Discworld* is coming out soon, and John Davison has copies of all of the books that he'll ruthlessly lift copy from if pushed.



APPARENTLY, dear Mr Pratchett has now sold more than four million of his *Discworld* novels the world over and is widely regarded as one of the funniest English authors ever. Bearing in mind that the vast majority of his work is purely fantasy with all kinds of wizards, warriors, talking vegetables and weird hyper-intelligent animals, you'd have thought that someone would have tried to produce a game already. The *Discworld* stuff all began way back in 1987, but it's only now that Mr P has given his approval for an "interactive" adventure project.

Enter Teeny Weeny Games, a small but

highly-regarded UK developer based in deepest, darkest Croydon. With the assistance of Terry, the team have been beaver away at a point-and-click adventure for the last year or so. Intended to be a cd-only project, the game will not only feature all of the most memorable characters and locations from the books, but will also feature the voice talents of a number of famous actors. Heading up the cast will be none other than Eric Idle, Monty Python star and one of the lead characters in Steven Spielberg's forthcoming *Casper the Friendly Ghost*. Alongside him we have Tony "Baldrick" Robinson and Jon "Dr Who" Pertwee. At one point it was even reported that Barbara Windsor might be playing a role in the production, but this has yet to be confirmed.

What's it like then?

The basic idea behind the whole thing is that rather than following the plot on any single book, you simply play the role of



Terry Pratchett: Erm, well, yes, you'd sort of expect this wouldn't you? The main man, our Tel. If you didn't know what he looks like, here's a picture of him... with a big hat on. There are loads of his books out there at the moment, and they're all dead brilliant.

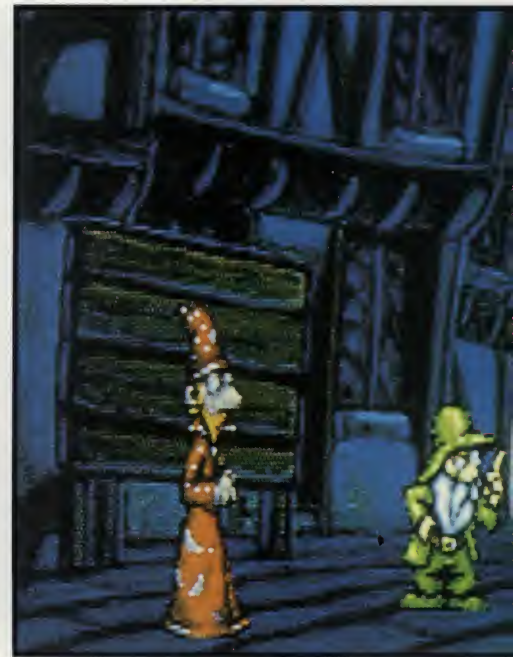
Eric Idle:

The star of the show, playing the part of Rincewind. Best known for being part of the Monty Python mob and singing "Always look on the bright side of life", which Simon Mayo used to play every bloody morning on Radio One.



Rincewind (the inept wizard who pops up in most of the *Discworld* books, for those of you who know nothing of the series) in a totally new scenario which makes use of the rich environment that Terry Pratchett has developed for his work. As the story unfolds you'll interact with many of the more famous characters from the books, including Twoflower (the terminal tourist and one time inn-sewer-ants salesman), Death, the Luggage, the Librarian (an Orangutan that used to be a wizard) and numerous others. Fans of the books will no doubt spend many hours of game time simply searching for their favourite characters. Rest assured though, if characters such as Evil-Smelling Bugger or even You

The star of the show is Rincewind - a wizard of sorts who is far from talented in magical ways. He's the chap in the big red dress and the silly red hat.



Famous Discworld Geezers



As is the trend with PC games these days, there are a number of extremely famous individuals associated with the *Discworld* project...

Tony Robinson:

Best known for his role as Baldrick in the *Blackadder* TV series on the Beeb, most people remember him for the "I've got a thingy that looks just like a turnip" sketch. No? Oh well, I thought it was funny, anyway.



Jon Pertwee:

Where has he been all this time then eh? Best known for being *Doctor Who* before Tom Baker took over, he was also occasionally spotted playing Wurzel Gummage on Saturday afternoons on ITV.

Bastard (the world's greatest living mathematician) don't appear this time around, they may pop up in future projects from Teeny Weeny. This isn't the only *Discworld* game on the go you see... oh no. Now that Psygnosis has its hand on the licence, it seems intent to get as much as possible from it, but more of this in a few months when further details are announced.

It's original too

What sets this apart from many other games of the genre, apart from the depth and humour of the characters and

scenarios, is the fact that the team has developed a totally original player interface. Whilst many of the latest adventure games are having a jolly good stab at ripping off LucasArts' SCUMM system, the Teeny boys and girls have opted to produce a Windows-based system which lets you set up the game in exactly the way you want. Basic interaction involves simply clicking on areas of the screen, but object usage and



(Left) Each backdrop looks absolutely fabulous and evokes the right atmosphere for the game. Anyone who has read the novels, or has taken a peek at the various supplement products, such as the recently published *Discworld Companion*, will instantly recognise many of the locations.

Interaction with NPC's (non-player characters) is simple, effective and brilliantly scripted.



(Above) The backdrops have all been hand painted and then digitised for use in the game.

so forth makes use of a series of resizable windows which can be moved around and plonked pretty much wherever you want. Once you have spent a bit of time with the system it makes you wonder why no-one has done it before!

Looking smart

Graphically the game looks fabulous. The version we were shown was far from finished, but the hand-painted backdrops and cartoon-like characters seemed to suit the whole concept surprisingly well.

As with anything visual that takes its inspiration from a work of fiction, there's always the risk that the result will be a far cry from everyone's perception of what the characters actually look like. Remember the film of *Lord of the Rings*? They may have got Gandalf right, but the Hobbit's feet were far too big for my liking. Anyway, I digress. If you check out the screen shots I'm sure you'll agree that it looks absolutely spot on.

So, just as long as everything goes according to plan, Psygnosis is hoping to have the game out in time for Christmas – just in time to stick on your Dear Santa... letter – on CD and floppy (the disk version will be a chopped down version with no speech) and we should be able to bring you a full review along with interviews and bags of info in the December issue of the mag. **Z**

Blueprint

Simon the Sorcerer II

PUBLISHER: Adventuresoft

PRICE: £44.99

TELEPHONE: 021 352 0874

RELEASE DATE: November

Simon The Sorcerer was the first true-Brit, blue-blooded, point-and-click adventure that could dare to challenge the might of LucasArts. But can the sequel really be any better? John Davison takes a peek.



(Above) The voice of Simon will once again be played by Chris Barrie in the CD version, and we're assured that the script is even funnier this time round.

THE ORIGINAL *Simon The Sorcerer*, released in the middle of last year, came as a real surprise to everyone. Not only was it a damn fine point-and-click adventure game that borrowed heavily (or "pinched mercilessly" as some more cynical reviewer might suggest) from games such as LucasArts' *Monkey Island*, it was also - shock, horror - British. The eventual introduction of a CD-ROM version a month or so ago, starring the combined voice talents of Chris Barrie and Roger Blake (he of *Spitting Image* fame) also ensured that everyone sat up and took a bloody good look at it.

Now that the sequel is almost upon us, it



would be safe to say that Adventuresoft has an awful lot to prove. Although the original was a super game, it was far from perfect and fell victim to a number of niggly, little problems which should have been sorted out. There was nothing particularly major, but the interface could have been better and the lack of any scrolling locations made it seem a bit primitive compared with the likes of *Day Of The Tentacle* or *Sam And Max*. With this new *Simon The Sorcerer* though, it would seem that a good few of these niggles have been sorted out and, dare I say it, improved upon.

There is now a totally new user interface, which, this time, is completely icon-based as opposed to the old-fashioned text-based thing, and the graphics have been enhanced enormously. All the locations now scroll across a number of superbly drawn screens and the animation has also received tremendous embellishment.

So what's the story?

If there was one thing that made the original *Simon* stand out from much of the other British stuff it was the fact that the script was bloody brilliant. Not only were the characters wonderfully developed, but there was also enough truly "Brit" humour to make this a game that could really raise a titter. Thankfully *Simon II* seems to share this quality and all the characters have been developed much further this time around.

Simon is now considerably older than before...



(Above and left) The graphics in *Simon II* are very similar to the original, but the animation is far better and there are many more frames of animation. (Below) Simon is now much older and struts his stuff in true grunge style complete with pony-tail and teenage yobbo attitude.

having hit puberty with a vengeance and come successfully out the other end, he is now a fully-grown teenage yobbo with long hair, Doc Martens and typically grungy plaid shirt. Although out of the sorcery business for some time, the story tells of how Sordid (the mean and yucky bad guy from the first game) has been inadvertently released from Hell (where he was banished to at the climax of the first game) and is now fully intent on wreaking his revenge on poor old Si. Enlisting the aid of the delectable



Runt, the devilish duo cause mayhem in their domain, thereby forcing Simon to yet again step through the mystical wardrobe transportation device and sort things out, whilst simultaneously getting mercilessly harangued and bullied by Runt and his ghost-like master.

Aside from the bad guys, it would appear that many of the old characters are present, including the irritating Swampy who has now opened a Swampburger and Mudshake joint, Calypso who seems to have opened some kind of magic emporium, and we're also reliably informed that there's a possibility of the woodworms returning in some kind of "special guest" capacity. To those of you who haven't played the original this information will be of little interest... who the hell is Calypso anyway?

When's It coming out then?

As long as everything goes according to plan we should see a simultaneous release of both the floppy and CD versions (the CD will again feature Chris Barrie and Roger Blake) before the end of the year. All speech for the talkie version has been recorded already and it's now just a case of the team banging everything together in order to get the thing out on time. ■



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CD-ROM Edition

Blueprint

Magic Carpet

PUBLISHER: Bullfrog/Electronic Arts

PRICE: Tba

TELEPHONE: 0483 579399

RELEASE DATE: November

In **Duncan MacDonald's** mundane and dusty world, a magic carpet would simply be a carpet that hoovered itself. In everyone else's exciting and romantic world, a magic carpet is a carpet that flies through the air. Cue the exciting and romantic people at Bullfrog...



IT'S A BIT of a non-starter, this preview. It's sort of a bit pointless. The reason why? Simply because we are looking at a Bullfrog game, which is like looking at a LucasArts game or a Geoff Crammond game. In other words, we're expecting excellence. But are we going to get it? Yet again? Er, yes actually (yawn). Let's take a small trip back in time i.e. to about a couple of weeks ago.

STARDATE September 1994:

I drive to the left-hand edge of the *London A to Z* map, get a bit lost, but then finally locate Bullfrog HQ. I am half an hour late, but surprisingly no-one seems to care. I'm ushered into a room and bribed with a cup of tea. I have a pack of 20 Silk Cut primed, but I am told I'm not allowed to smoke. (Boo).

About a minute later:

I'm joined by Peter Molyneux, Bullfrog's numero uno. He isn't allowed to smoke either. (Hooray). He fires up the Bullfrog "showing off" PC (a Pentium 90 affair), takes a seat, and tells me about his recent bout of toilet-fever, caused by eating a dodgy chicken kebab. He explains in gory detail how he was incapacitated for a week, losing a stone in the process. He says he's thinking of patenting this weight-losing technique: calling it the K-Plan diet, and advertising his own diseased "chicken kebabs" on telly. A good idea. We're in the middle of discussing possible slogans for the K-Plan diet ad campaign when suddenly the monitor is filled with a vast mountain-scape. It looks like a photograph. It makes *Comanche Maximum Overkill's* scenery look like a pile of old cack. Peter reaches for the keyboard and mouse. He is about to show me this scenery moving.

Five mins later:

I think about how I really hate the word "gobsmacked", and remind myself how I'd vowed years ago never to use it. Unfortunately, I realise it's actually a fairly good word to explain my current situation. Yes. I am "gobsmacked". "Smacked in the Gob". Not speechless, though, because instead I'm babbling slightly - "Blimey", "Wow", "Excellent", "Smart", "Lummee", and so on.

"Watch this," says Peter, and he launches a spell/missile at a particularly rocky outcrop of land. Before my very eyes, and with the magic carpet still flying at high speed, the landmass rips itself apart, forming a gigantic crevasse. Peter flies the carpet into this ravine and the newly-formed cliffs to either side scroll past seamlessly. The sense of speed is phenomenal. Beneath us now is water. The cliffs are reflected in the water, and the water itself is undulating. And still everything is moving as smoothly and effortlessly as ever. "That was an earthquake bomb," says Peter, proudly. I make a sort of gagged, whining noise in reply. "Now for a volcano bomb," says Peter. And on and on.

20 minutes later:

It's utterly amazing. Every single flying thing in the game has a shadow, and if the flying things in question are over water, there are reflections. And it's all happening at machine number 12.

Magic Carpet is a non-stop roller coaster ride of Byzantine proportions. It's a shoot-

You've got to be there really. For instance these figures are as scary as the Harpies in *Jason And The Argonauts*.



'em-up, basically - I've gleaned that much from watching Peter blast nine trillion nasties into oblivion. "Yes, it is a shoot'em-up," he agrees, "But there's strategy involved as well." He kills a dragon and then continues. "It's all about collecting Manna. Everytime you kill something, it drops to the ground and becomes a Manna Ball. As you collect more of these Manna Balls, you are given access to more powerful spells." I suggest at this point that it's a bit like *Populous*. Peter says he's fed up of everyone saying "Oh, that's Bullfrog... they did that game *Populous* once". So I shut up. He goes on: "Unfortunately, you have a computer-controlled enemy to contend with, and he's doing the same thing as you. He can nick your Manna Balls, so you have to build a fortress to keep them safe." Cue the "fortress bomb". Peter shoots the side of a hill and a castle grows magically from the ground. There's a reflection of all this in the water. He sends in another bolt: the castle grows defensive walls. He casts a different spell, and suddenly there are armies of undead soldiers patrolling the castle keep. (You have to see this stuff to believe it, really.) Then Peter zooms off



There's a trick you have to do with these screenshots to truly understand the brilliance of the moving game...

elsewhere, kills 30 trillion more nasties, aims an explodey spell at some trees (thereby starting a forest fire), and does battle with the enemy wizard. The action is absolutely relentless. The sound effects and music are superb.

30 minutes later:

Slightly exhausted simply from having watched the proceedings for an hour, I ask about the number of levels, the addictiveness, extra trimmings and so forth. Here's roughly what's on sale. There are 50 levels of increasing difficulty, and the learning/addictiveness curve is akin to *Populous* or *Syndicate*. There can be up to seven computer-controlled enemy wizards in action at any one time (depending on your current level). You'll encounter different types of

...First you have to strike yourself in the temple with a heavy object, and then you have to shake the page about in front of your eyes, really quickly.

terrain. There's going to be a multi-player option, enabling eight people to go head to head... and there are ten special levels designed purely for these clashes. There's a 3D-mode where you use the old red/green glasses (and it works brilliantly). Oh, and there's a further viewing mode which is as novel as it is bizarre i.e. the "auto stereogram" mode. You know? Those pictures that at first look just like a random bunch of dots, but turn into 3D images when you get your head around them (or not, if you are anything like me)? Yes. Those things. But they're actually "moving".

The only question you may need answering then, is this one: What's *Magic Carpet* like on a slightly useless PC? I was assured that it's fine on a DX33 and above. Praise the Lord! Amen. ☑

2D or not 2D? That is the question...



Normal View

Here's a static image in regular 2D. Both of your eyes are receiving identical visual information, so your brain has to add some stuff of its own to make the action seem more relevant. It uses the relative sizes and positions of objects, does a quick equation regarding mistiness (background) and clarity (foreground), makes some guesses, and voila... er, still 2D. (But you sort of know what it'd be like if it was 3D.)



Red/green 3D-glasses view

And here the brain has a bit of help. Using coloured filters (i.e. cheap bits of transparent plastic), both eyes see a different image. Suddenly, parallax enters the equation. Your brain is very happy. It's used to this parallax stuff. It rewards you by sending chemicals to your muscles when it appears that an object in the monitor is about to collide with your nose. You duck, you weave... you jump clean out of your skin.

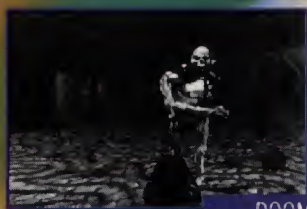


Auto stereogram (i.e. dots)

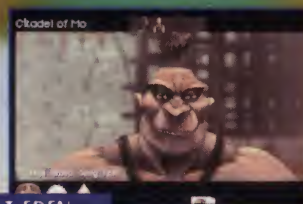
Here we have 3D without the need for bi-coloured plastic glasses: apparently, your brain does all the work itself. And I say "your" brain for a reason, because the sad fact is that my own brain doesn't seem to want to join in the fun. God knows I've hassled it enough, but all I ever seem to see is dots, dots, dots. Still, if your brain works better than mine, you'll be seeing this screenshot in depth-o-vision.

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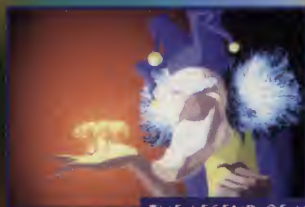
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Reviews

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Games reviews are what *PCZONE* is all about and over the next 100 or so pages you'll find loads! All games receive an overall mark out of 100 and are scored according to the following guidelines:

90+ (PCZONE Classic) Highly-original idea, expertly executed, utterly flawless in all departments and oozing long-term playability.

80-89 (PCZONE Recommended) High degree of originality and extremely well executed in all but one department.

70-79 Strong idea and well executed, though not necessarily very original. Weaknesses do not impair playability and it has a reasonably long life.

60-69 Adequate. Games falling into the "If you like this style of game you'll like this, if not you won't" category.

50-59 Seen it all before, take it or leave it. Not terrible, but not exactly fab.

40-49 Dodgy but playable (probably only once).

39 & Below Seriously weak, avoid at all costs! Check out the Specs box for a guideline as to what memory, graphic and sound support you will need to run the game and if you're still not sure what we're on about the In Perspective box should give you an idea as to how the game compares with others of the genre.

WHAT'S IN OUR DISK CADDIES?

Some games get played, others get nicked, some get binned. Here's what's on our harddrives/in our disk caddies this month.

System Shock

Doom II

Inferno

PGA 486

Desert Strike

60



66



71



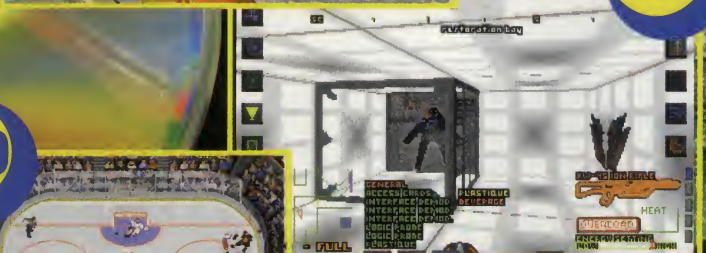
75



78



92



109



REVIEW

Doom II

Doom II



PHOTOS: Garry Hunter



David McCandless is not a happy FragMaster™. At last the year's most awaited sequel, *Doom II*, has arrived and... and... and... read on...



LET'S GET this over with... *Doom II: Hell On Earth* is: a) Not *Quake* – the mythical next game/epic from ID studios which is set to be as advanced as *Doom* was to *Wolfenstein* and will make *Doom* look like plasticine with its looking up and down, grenade throwing, climbing inside vehicles, over bridges and that.

So, the sequel to the much played game of the year (or thus far in human history, depending on how you took to it) is more of:

- b) An add-on,
- c) An upgrade
- Not dissimilar, you could say, to:
- d) *Spear Of Destiny* to *Wolfenstein*
- e) Haitian Scenery Disks for *Flight Sim 5*
- f) An expensive "speech pack" for an Origin game and quite similar, bar a few new bits, to:
- g) the old *Doom*

The Old Doom

The old *Doom*, aaaah, (soft focus), what a game... what a game... aah, the times we had. For those who haven't experienced *Doom* yet (and I can't believe there is a single pc person on this planet who hasn't yet run screaming from a room full of barons or fallen headlong into a tidal wave of cacodemons) the idea is very uncomplicated. You, a tough space marine, are sent on a secret mission to Mars, where various bio-mechanical/black magic type experiments have resulted in the accidental opening of a portal to Hell. Thousands of evil little demons have poured through said portal, murdered the staff of the research base, and then reanimated them as gun-toting zombies. With just the aid of some choice hardware – chainsaw, rocket launcher, shotgun and plasma gun – you have to penetrate 27 sprawling, labyrinthine levels solving minor puzzles, engaging in cataclysmic fire fights, leaping from parapets, drowning in radioactive slime, being blown up by barrels, fireballs, plasma, your own rockets, and somebody else's rockets. It's all good harmful fun. And, at the end of all this fun, you saved Mars from a fate worse than eternal death, only to bring the hordes of Hell hurtling towards Earth as you returned home.

This is where *Doom II* picks up the 'story'. Earth has been invaded by demons, who have spawned some new offspring, destroyed most of the world's population, and brought their own arcane style of architecture to our beautiful cities. The game, then, is much the same as the first. You, hardened marine, must penetrate 32 sprawling, labyrinth levels, solving minor puzzles, engaging in cataclysmic fire fights... and so on and so on. The main differences are new wall textures, a new weapon, six new monsties, and the difficulty level.

Doom II is pitched at experienced *Doom* pros. The kind of person, not a million miles away from this word processor, who has really played *Doom*. I mean, truly, sadly, deeply played *Doom*, until they dreamt about it, and couldn't go into the Underground without a shotgun. The kind of person who would watch *Terminator 2* and comment to his friends, when Arnie picks up the gaitling gun, that he'd "been there, done that". The kind of person who through



NEW DOOM-O-SCOPE

AESTHETIC DIFFERENCES

When you start playing *Doom*, if you're were an addict of the original (and let's face it, how could you fail not to be?), you'll soon notice subtle differences in the texture and graphics as well as a new look weapon...



THE TITLE SCREEN

The first difference, of course, is the title screen. It's not quite as well drawn as the first, but it pretty much sums up all you need to know about *Doom II* (i.e. "you are going to get killed. Horribly").



THE LOOK

The look of *Doom II* has changed slightly. Some wall textures are the same (you'll recognise the concrete walls and floors) but most have changed into "real life" textures such as red brick, cobbled stone and book cases.



THE SKY

The sky, too, has changed. The first few levels have a smoggy, smokey brown sky – a good excuse for a series of very dark levels. The middle section uses a burning city backdrop and then it's your atypical mountain vista with blood red skin for sky in the final levels.

MONSTERS MENAGERIE

The main innovation in *Doom II* are the new "things". Alongside our existing ugly zombies and tomato monsters, a new breed of "scaries" have appeared. Lethal little buggers they are to. Check them out.



PAIN ELEMENTAL

The new cacodemons look like little babies. They open their mouths and fire... nothing. Until you notice the large amount of lost souls appearing. Yeah, the baby cacos shoot those goddamn skulls all over the place and, worse still, turn into three lost souls when they die.



ARACHNOTRONS

Baby spider monsters – what a pain these guys are. Half the size of their paters, they move faster and fire deadly plasma balls. Their imposing and never-ending fire power will send the most arch of arch FragMasters™ (bar myself of course) scurrying for cover.



REVENANTS

These are weird and tall. If they're far away, they fire small homing fireballs with the impact power of a glancing rocket blast. If they're up close, they start punching you (bizarre). Continuous plasma bolts will shut their spooky, little skeletal mouths up.

TRICKS 'N' TRAPS

The name of this level does not bode well, but any self-respecting WadEmperor™, DoomKing™, or Baron Bane™ would not be deluded by the calm serenity of its entry hall (fig 1). Eight doors await your perusal and beyond them, we anticipate, there are many tricks and traps (I'm clever like that).

The first peril is a wall of demons (fig 2) thrashing, nay straining, against each other in a disconcerting attempt to get at you. This seems to be the unsubtle vogue in *Doom II* – lots of monsters, all in a massive lump, waiting for you to trigger their release so they can eat you. Hah. Let them eat rocket.

The next room, a pleasantly thin corridor, holds a deadly trap. A baron appears when you grab the chainsaw and promptly teleports behind you, giving you exactly 0.1 picoseconds to turn and destroy before being frazzled. Hah. But if you're as quick as I was, four good direct hits should flatten him (fig 3).

The next room is a great room. Sneak in, quietly, biding your time (any DeathMatch player knows the wisdom of this). Plant yourself behind the wall of barons and just watch the show as Rocket Launcher Hands kills every last one of them (fig 4). Hah. Then you just have to pick up the supercharge and murder any stragglers. And a final point: all ye hordes of hell beware! This is what happens when a mass of imps try to sneak up on a DoomKing (fig 5). Nobody messes with us.

FIG 1



FIG 2



FIG 3



FIG 4



FIG 5





NINJA SHOTGUN

The only new weapon in *Doom II* is the ninja shotgun. A true double-barrel sawn-off, using two shells to tear the face off all nearby monsters. It's useful when faced with hordes of monsties but takes an age to reload which can be dangerous when you're being swamped.



DOORS AND LIFTS

Doors and lifts now move a lot faster. Like the doors on the Death Star, these portals open more or less instantly, giving you less time to react and less time to back out of them in a hurry. The lifts, too, swoosh down in a split second, usually ridden by half-a-millionimps.



MANCUBUS

Fat, ugly and very deadly, the ManCubus moves slowly but shoots fast. Two fast big fireballs at oblique angles to be exact. They're tough and annoyingly accurate when shooting – a couple of good rockets will sort them out. Just. What the barons were in *Doom I*.



ARCHVILE

Last but by no means least is the ArchVile: he who waits for you in later levels. Not only does he leap gaps and jump around like a gazelle. Not only does the boy target you with deadly yellow fire. But, he also resurrects almost all the dead monsters in a reasonable radius.

down-to-midnight deathmatch-a-thons is now probably divorced, excommunicated from his family, on the run from the Mob, and an outcast to his friends – all except that grizzled bunch of three coffee-swilling “Doom chums”. Those special kinds of friends who you thought were alright, who shook you by the hand, bought you a pint, and lent you money when you were down on your luck. Your real friends who gave you a shoulder to cry on and support when you needed it. And then what did they do when you played network *Doom*? They WAITED in the BLOODY ROCKET LAUNCHER ROOM on EVERY single level WITHOUT FAIL and BLASTED you OVER and OVER again. I mean, I ask you, IS THAT SKILL? HUH? IS THAT SKILL? Or is that, maybe, possibly, talentless little cowards hiding in a hole? Yellow bellied toe-rags skulking in their little, tiny “dens”? Huh? HUH?

Ahem.

As you can see, *Doom* can have a rather profound impact on one's life. Adrenaline, testosterone, endomorphines, lymphocytes – every little chemical reactant in your body attuned to the wall of gore and mayhem in front of your eyes.

Doom II will force you to re-evaluate your tolerance levels. This is much harder. The levels have changed in tact. Instead of gradually ascending in difficulty, ushering you gradually into the *Doom* ethos, *Doom II*'s initial levels set the pace for the rest of the game. The first three levels are of the bearable Shores Of Hell style difficulty, and then level four cracks open your jaw and shoves a shotgun down your vacant gullet. Level five snaps your knee like a dry twig and breaks a crowbar over the back of your neck. Level six tears your arms off and force feeds you them while you watch. And level seven ties your trunk to the floor and tickles the soles of your feet with blades of grass.

Great expectations

Each wad is staged to play on your expectations. Switches, which look like they'll activate the trap door to the left, actually open the cavern of cacodemons behind. A crushy ceiling which couldn't possible get you, splits into four before you can escape, and waffles you on the spot. Walls drop in ambush everywhere and, once they've dropped and released a cascade of nasties, the wall behind the wall that

dropped, drops, unleashing another wave of repellent little hungries. The new monsters are scary little peckers, again playing on the complacency of arch DoomKings. Those baby spiders don't look so tough – arrrrghhhh! Those fat plasma men are pretty difficult to miss – yeeaaaaaaghh! Those chaingun sergeants will drop with one shotgun – bleurraghahahag! It's tough out there.

But, overall, and I'm going to drop a small fragmentation bombshell with nails inside here, *Doom II* is a very disappointing sequel. You see, something happened in those long months between *Dooms*. DEU and a host of *Doom* level editors appeared on bulletin boards and coverdisks. Of the hundreds of new

THE WOLFENSTEIN LEVEL

FIG 6



FIG 8

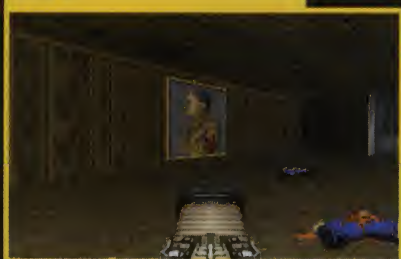


The *Wolfenstein* secret level (accessed from level 16) is probably *Doom II*'s nicest touch. This level recreates sections of old *Wolfy*'s first level exactly (fig 6). Right down to the chaingun-wielding sergeants, disturbingly shouting “Mein Lieben” when

FIG 7



FIG 9



they die (fig 7). Instead of the politically incorrect alsatians which were massacred in *Wolfenstein*, we have some *Doom*-style MP-friendly pink demons (fig 8). Strangely, Hitler's still on the walls (fig 9). Cor, eh? ID – they take no prisoners.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Well, since *Doom* shook the world, a few pretenders have launched their stake in the 3D shoot 'em up market. *Corridor 7* used the now antiquated *Wolfenstein* engine and suffered accordingly. *Terminator*, *Rampage* and *In Extremis* unfortunately materialised at the same time as *Doom* and suffered accordingly. Only *System Shock*, Origin's latest masterpiece, which combines elements of *Doom* and role-playing for a fully rounded gaming experience, comes close to *Doom*'s mastery of the 3D engine.

Doom I & II

Corridor 7

Terminator Rampage

In Extremis

System Shock

FIG 10



FIG 11



FIG 12



FIG 13



SUBURBS

The Suburbs is a typical *Doom II* level – scary multi-levelled city and streets style layout coupled with well-placed and out of sight snipers (fig 10). There are bags of

traps too. The “streets” are littered with troopers and sergeants. This level is all about leaps of faith (fig 11) and exploring strange teleporty rooms with weird textures (fig 12). The last section, leading to a special exit, is no walk-over either, it being a horribly complex spiral made of shoot-through walls (fig 13). Yeaarrghhh.

(Right) Chunkier than their shotgun-wielding cousins, the new chaingun sergeants should be avoided. They have the tendency of sitting way off in the distance and just piling you with bullets. The best policy is to burst them with a shotgun (they do, they actually pop into gory body-parts) or coax them into an “argument” with some nearby troopers.



levels designed, some were crap, some were outstandingly brilliant, better than the originals. Some had new graphics, some had new sounds. Meanwhile, more and more people were experiencing network, serial, and modem multiplayer. They'd realised the staying power of *Doom* was not in massive WADs and new monsters, but in engaging your friends in virtual combat, and using the old cerebellum as well as the steaming maw of a rocket launcher.

And now, *Doom II*'s revolutionary new features have come a little bit too late. Sure, as a stand-alone game for someone who's never played the original, *Doom II* is a sound investment – an excellent adventure into Hell. For DeathMatch players, *Doom II* offers the new negative frags for suicide Deathmatch rules – a welcome addition for those BASTARDS who top themselves the moment they lose a single percent of health. And of course the mighty ninja shotgun adds a certain novelty to Deathmatch play. The new sound effects are outstandingly good. The new monsters and amusing *Wolfenstein* secret levels add incentive for *Doom* vets, but overall, speaking as a gnarled old pro myself, I wanted more. I wanted more new weapons. I wanted new features, new puzzles maybe, new programming – more than just a few faster doors and lifts. It's your choice ultimately. But I think you're going to be disappointed. ☹

And finally... a big thanks to the chaps at the Tottenham Court Road Computer Exchange for the loan of their tomato monster. You can contact them if you want to buy, swop or sell on (071) 636 2666.



(Above) Whichever route you choose to take, life's a breeze for a DoomKing.

62

SCORE

Disappointing for *Doom* pros. Not enough new stuff and few levels which can't be beaten on the amateur scene.

90

SCORE

A welcome addendum to *Doom* for virgins and those who've missed the extra levels. New monsters, new thrills and a new gun, but slightly too hard and inaccessible for newcomers.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
(8Mb recommended)

Minimum Processor: 386 DX (486 recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 16Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster and Compatibles, AWE32, UltraSound, Thunderboard, Sound Canvas and General Midi.

Controls: Joystick, Keyboard, Mouse

Price: Tba Release Date: October

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Tel: 081 960 2255



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PGA Tour Golf 486

**PC
ZONE
CLASSIC**



Patrick McCarthy is to golf what Ronnie Corbett is to basketball. Unfortunately, he looks more like Craig Stadler than anyone else, so he got the plumb golf review anyway.

(Above) The sun was out, God was in his heaven, and all was right with the world. If only the young German had known how badly the day would turn out, he would have shot himself there and then.

Y

OU GET a bit of a mixed impression when you first load PGA 486. On the one hand, there's the lush graphics, exquisitely-turned logos and gorgeous colourways of the various intro screens, and on the other, there's the music. Somebody at EA has obviously decided to abandon its recent trend toward toe-tapping popstasticity, and gone all out for "taste" with a bit of

low-key acoustic guitar-work. Unfortunately, it sounds uncannily like when Americans get cancer in made-for-TV movies. After a while you have to turn it off, if only to stop the laughter.

So, apart from music that will make you chortle up your sleeve and spurt beer out of your nose, what do you get? You get three exquisitely appointed courses, recently modernised, all with g.c.h. and good access to shops and transport. Fewer courses than the seven you got with PGA II, but then they take up a lot more room. You also get the usual option to play practice rounds, tournaments and skins games, and to practice any individual hole you want. What you won't have seen before, unless you have

played PGA European Tour on the consoles, is the Matchplay option – also known as "real golf, as it should be played" (preferably in tweed hacking jackets and plus twos, using clubs with funny names).

Swinngng...

Also new to this version are the selectable difficulty levels, which directly affect the new swing-meter. (It works the same as every other power-bar – except Links – with the three click system.) Previously when you created a golfer in PGA, you had the choice between pro or amateur tees, and whether you'd have a caddy to help you out, whose choice of club you could then completely ignore before each shot. Now there are three levels of difficulty – the easier the level you choose, the slower the power bar moves round the swing-meter and the more leeway you get when you try to hit the directional bit at the bottom. At the easiest setting, you could probably have an epileptic fit and still get the ball on the fairway (as long as nobody blocked your view trying to put a sock in your mouth).

To counter this ease of use, you can't hit the ball as far – it's about 50 yards less with a driver than at the hardest setting. In terms of comparative difficulty, I'd say the middle setting equates roughly to that of PGA II. The shape of the bar takes a little getting used to at the hardest setting, but this is as it should be. Foolishly, I loaded the game and launched straight in at the hardest levels and my first shot went so far right it took me a simulated hour to walk over and get it.

Your very own Fanny...

The caddy help facility has also been refined, with three levels of interfering busy-body to select. At the easy and middle levels, the presence of the caddy even gives you a target area on the power bar to aim for. In other words, lazy gits don't even have to work out what strength of shot to play any more. Caddy levels operate independently of the difficulty levels, so you can have your golfer playing on maximum





(Left) The young Irishman, on the other hand, seemed to have hit mid-season form at just the right moment.

difficulty, but with maximum help from the caddy.

Many of the elements that made the old versions of PGA a bit on the poor side have either been removed completely, or have been improved. Obviously the graphics are the major difference: no more crappy, six-frame swing animation, with the sprite winding up for a 300-yard drive even when you're playing a five-yard chip, and no more three trees per course.

What they haven't changed is that God-awful random wind factor, whereby you carefully calculate out your aim, taking into account wind direction, shot shape and hazards, only to see the wind direction change as you reach the top of your backswing. Still, you can always switch it off.



(Above) The fourth hole's unique feature was the enormous palm tree used as a flag.

IN PERSPECTIVE

The designers behind *PGA Tour Golf 486* have borrowed freely from these other golf games' good points quite successfully.

PGA 486

Links 386

PGA Golf II

Jack Nicklaus UG&CD

David Leadbetter

Shot Selection

PGA 486 has "adapted" ideas from Links 386 to aid you in your shot making. The deliberately-chosen draw or fade shot is nothing new, but where Links does it "properly" by altering your swing-path (out-to-in for fade, etc.), and adds more or less backspin by positioning the ball in relation to your feet, PGA's approach is more basic: you simply adjust the amount of side or backspin you want to put on the ball with the keyboard or mouse. This is where the option to have the overhead view of the hole constantly on display comes into its own. The big arrow on-screen shows where the ball will end up from your viewpoint, but as you move this around, it moves on the overhead view as well. When you select a draw or fade (note the spin indicated on the ball at the left of the screen - see pic below right) the projected shot path alters accordingly on both of the indicators.



The designers have also borrowed freely from other golf games' good points: like Jack Nicklaus Ultimate Golf, you can now set the weather, course and green conditions yourself (except the wind direction in Nicklaus is logical); like Links, an overhead view of the hole can be seen at all times; like Links (again) and David Leadbetter, there are ways to adjust the type of shot you'll play i.e. adding extra back- and side-spin without recourse to deliberate





Have you seen the state of this man's armpits? No wonder they call him Fuzzy...

miss hits. Players the world over will also rejoice that, finally, EA has seen sense and trashed the God-awful separate screen "putting grid" and added a standard grid overlay, like every other golf game in the known universe has had for years.

Multimeeja golf

The courses available – Summerlin, Sawgrass and River Highlands – will all be familiar to anyone who's played *PGA II*. They look amazing – a lot of time had been spent researching each nook and cranny of the courses so that every tree, rock, tyre mark and discarded condom is as it should be. If ever a computer game could be called a thing of beauty, it's this one. Unfortunately, the game only has American golfers as pros to play against – but the difference is that this time, they're digitised from video footage of the real players. This lot swing, miss putts, and relieve themselves against nearby trees just like the real thing.

The fact that it's on CD-ROM allows for a lot of "extras," in the form of crowd responses and reverential whispered commentary. This is fine, as far as it goes, but there isn't that wide a range of phrases. Stuff like, "This very long putt looks more or less

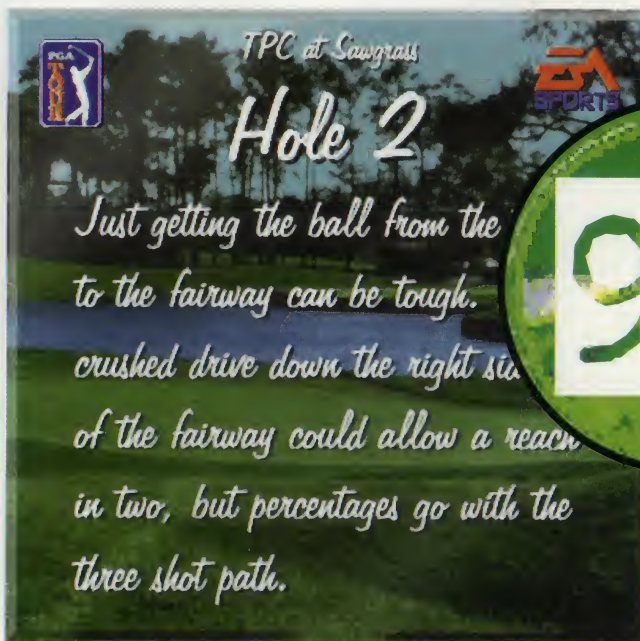
Words, that's all they are. Empty words. Gusts of air. Mere, empty expulsions. From the lungs. Well, written down in this case, but you know what I mean.

Time is of the essence

As you can see, *PGA 486* has some pretty fabbo-looking scenery. But, as we already know from the days when *Links 386* ruled the visual roost, it seems like only yesterday that a 386/33 was a scarcely-tamed monster – fabulous looking scenery always comes at a price. The price in this case is that the recommended minimum processor for running this is no less than a 486/33.

It does say a 386/40 in the manual (with 8MB RAM) but, believe me, you won't enjoy it. I tried it on a 486SX/25, and was plunged into snailspace, the virtual netherworld that lies beneath Jerko-vision. Loading each hole took an age, and play ran in fits and starts. Several times there was a good 30 seconds between completing a swing on the swing meter and the player starting to move to play the shot. Putts progressed in stages toward the hole – on one occasion, I thought that the ball had stopped on the lip of the hole: I reeled away in annoyance, falling to my knees to tear at the carpet and curse the inventors of golf (it's the taking part that counts. Yeah, yeah.) only to hear, a few seconds later, the plop of ball into hole.

On a 486DX2-66, sporting a throbbing 16 megs of RAM (that's going to look pretty funny in 18 months time, isn't it?) the game – as indeed you would hope – ran pretty damn smoothly, but we're still talking about a good minute between finishing one hole and being able to tee off at the next. So pay heed to the minimum requirements, or a life of bitter torment will be yours. The days of the 386 coping happily with a major game are no longer with us – especially in America, where a Pentium 100 costs £1.50.



dead straight," would be more entertaining if the commentator lapsed into "Ten bucks on the fat guy to miss." But I suppose that would undermine the majesty of the Tour.

One of the things that the game lacks is any real sense of taking part in a tournament. Yes, you get the other golfers' scores after each hole, but you don't get the old-style reporter popping up to tell you what's going on elsewhere on the course anymore. And with less courses to play, it won't be long before you've won every tournament. Still, I'm sure we won't mind coughing up again for a few extra courses at a later date. One we've heard of would be nice.

Direct comparisons with *Links 386* are inevitable. It doesn't attempt to compete with *Links* on the multiple-view screen-layout front, and golfing purists may still prefer *Links* for the shot-making niceties, where shots are played by adjusting swing path, ball position and stance rather than by adding spin to the ball in a relatively artificial manner. Basically, this is a very flash version of a previous game, that, apart from digitising the pros, doesn't do anything stunningly new. It's a visual feast – and if you have the machine to run it happily, it plays very well, too. But remember that coming in the near future are *World Cup Golf*, *Sensible Golf* and even, lawks a mercy, *Links 486* – I shudder to think what that will need to run. It might be worth waiting for our all-encompassing golf feature in

next month's issue before you go throwing your money around. ☒

SCORE

Gorgeous looking, solid playing – and it tastes good too.

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Minimum Processor: 386/40 (486/33 recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 12.5Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: SVGA

Sound Cards All major sound cards supported

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CYCLEMANIA

Get the motor running... head out on the highway... looking for adventure? Well tough – this ain't an adventure game, it's a bike sim. Warren Christmas has a fine piece of kit between his legs.

There are still a number of game types that haven't benefited from the CD-ROM revolution, and one of these is the racing game genre. The only original title to appear on silver disc for the PC so far is *MegaRace*, which isn't much of a race and certainly isn't "mega", despite its stunning graphics and presentation. *Cyclemania* shares *MegaRace*'s technique of streaming the background graphics from the disc as you race with sprites overlaid,

but here the similarities end. Where *MegaRace* is set in the future and features pre-rendered graphics, *Cyclemania* uses digitised graphics of roads in Israel, homeland of Compro, the game's designers. And features motorbikes, not cars.

When moving, the surroundings of *Cyclemania* look wonderful – and the game shifts at a fair old pace. The feeling of accelerating and decelerating is excellent, quite an achievement considering the method of reading the data. Sadly, the overlaid graphics aren't so impressive. The bikes, riders and other objects have been drawn using a few basic colours and, therefore, don't fit in that well with the background. There are a variety of cut sequences, some of which have been created on computer, while others have been digitised. This is a perfect example of how not to mix the two types of graphics. Even the best of the computer animations seen here (and some of them are very good) come off badly against real footage. The two styles just don't work when they're used in the same game.

Ironically, the game itself is also a curious mix. It's as if the programmers couldn't decide whether to make it an arcade game or a simulation. When you're playing the full game you're out to get a good placing to gain championship marks. Finish first and you win money which can be spent on better bike parts. Each lap is timed, and there's a separate scoring system complete with high-score table.



Some races can get pretty rough. Here, I'm 12 laps into a 30 lap race, and I'm the only rider left!



When you tumble, you're "treated" to a completely unrelated crash video sequence.



Look mum, there's a plane in the sky.



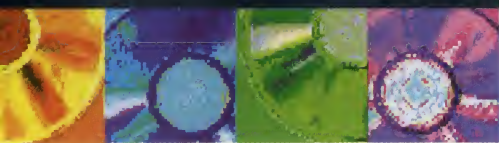
Nobody ever said that winning would be easy. Navigating the course is easy, staying out of trouble isn't.

(Below) Some lovely rendered animations are included, but they don't really fit in with the digitised graphics. Note that this poor rider doesn't have a visor. Strange.



(Right) Although you see the bike's instruments, your rider does appear on the screen. Guess which one I am?





Choosing a quick race throws you into the action using pre-determined options which can be chosen and saved à la FIGP.

Alternatively you can choose to enter a single race, or the full blown championship spread over the five different tracks. With the latter two options you get the chance to practice, qualify or go straight in and race. Practising is for wimps, so you can ignore that. What's strange is the qualifying: there are only six bikes in each race – two start on each of the three starting grid rows, so who cares if you're first or last when you start? The bikes are so close together on the start line, it really doesn't make any difference. Aside from the main race type option you get to choose how many laps you want to cover (1-30), a bike and character, the skill of the opposition, the control difficulty and manual or automatic gears.

After indifferent first impressions, once on the track, *Cyclemania* shows its true colours. The music fits the mood of the game and the handling and animation of your bike is nothing short of excellent – it wobbles and skids nicely when you hit oil, for instance, and each bike even has a working brake-light. Only the crash animation lets it down: your bike falls into pieces and then, miraculously, you find yourself back on it a few seconds later.

Crash and burn

It doesn't take long to get to grips with the control, which is just as well as you also need to contend with two-way traffic – cars, trucks, police bikes and so on, the odd animal, such as cows and horses plus, bizarrely, airborne planes and helicopters, all with appropriate sound samples. The aircraft don't hit you – presumably they're just there to put you off.

Staying on the track and outpacing the other bikes, especially on the lower levels, is not particularly hard. Avoiding the various obstacles, however, is not so easy and each time you hit something substantial you crash which causes your health to decrease. Only when you cross the start/finish line does some of it replenish. This brings in tactics. Either by using the map

screen or by bringing up the opposition chart, you can see where you are in relation to the other riders. Imagine you're out front, slightly ahead of the pack but with very little energy left, do you a) go as fast as you can to keep in the lead, or b) take it easy ensuring that it isn't "game over"? The answer is, of course, that you try to do both.

Hell for leather

The other bikes also suffer damage, so it's not uncommon to finish a race with less than the original six bikes remaining. Often the opposing riders will self-inflict damage, but you can help them out with either a little nudge or by blocking their path. As the collision detection can be slightly unpredictable when you're involved with other bikes (generally the game is okay in this department), it's normally best to try to avoid trouble altogether. If you've played *Road Rash*, it's worth pointing out that they really are quite different games as with *Cyclemania* (intentional) violence is really a secondary consideration. There's also an option to race against friendly or aggressive opponents, but they rarely seem to bother you and there's certainly no punching or kicking.

Cyclemania is far from perfect, but for all its faults, it's still very enjoyable to play. Accolade plans future enhancements such as a multi-player version and new circuits – the Isle of Man TT race track is apparently top of the list. With these changes and a few tweaks, it could become a classic. As it stands, *Cyclemania* is a good effort, but a little ragged around the edges. **Z**



This is the alternative viewing screen in glorious SVGA. The graphics look better, although they're just too small for comfort and unfortunately you don't get much time to look at the map.

TRACKS OF MY TEARS

There are five different circuits in *Cyclemania*. The digitised graphics were filmed by strapping a camera to a car. They don't quite match up when you cross the start/finish line – the sky often changes colour for example – but I guess this is excusable. At first, the tracks appear to be very similar, but there are subtle differences (honest). Here's the low-down...

EASY STREET
Rolling hillsides, all pretty straight forward really.

SHOCK TREATMENT
Barren landscapes (These are all the bloody same. Ed.)

DESERT HEAT
No, they're not. Look, this one has rocks and cliffs and things.

DEEP TROUBLE
The closest you get to a town or city. (In the game or in Israel itself? Ed.)

FOREST SHADOWS
Er, it's a forest and yes it casts shadows on the bikes. Lovely.

SCORE

Underneath a slightly messy exterior, there's a great game bursting to get out.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb recommended

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 1.5Mb maximum

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA, SVGA for the map screen

Sound Cards Supported: Pro Audio Spectrum +/16, SoundBlaster

Controls: Supported Keyboard, Joystick

Comments: DOS 5.0 or above required; Hayes-compatible modems supported; 132-column printers supported

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Publisher: Accolade **Tel:** 081 788 0200

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Shooting the pillars sometimes rewards you with a power-up.

CHAOS ENGINE

Mr Cursor is afraid of just about everything. The only thing that frightens **Chris Anderson** is Amiga conversions. We gave him this one just for a few giggles.



USUALLY APPROACH PC shoot-em-ups with extreme caution. Almost without exception, they have all been converted from original Amiga or console versions, with varying degrees of success. Classic characteristics of games converted from Amiga to pc are uninspired graphics, crap sound, and a general feeling that whoever programmed the code felt it was a chore and just wanted to get it out of the way as quickly as possible.

There are reasons to be slightly more optimistic about this one, though. To start with, it's a Bitmap Brothers game. The last shoot-em-up they produced for the Amiga, which was subsequently converted for the pc, was *Xenon 2 Megablast*, and it turned out to be something of a classic in the genre. Also, the Bitmap Brothers have brought games of all descriptions to the pc (platformers, futuristic sports sims etc.) and they have all been of exceptionally high quality in terms of graphics and gameplay. You could be forgiven then, for expecting something a little bit special from their latest offering, *The Chaos Engine*. If you are, you won't be disappointed. Well, not completely anyway. Before we get into the nitty gritty of the game, a little scene-setting would appear to be in order...

Maniac Mansion

The game is set in a remote Victorian mansion. The Chaos Engine (a machine created by a nutty professor) has gone berserk. This has the calamitous side effect of disrupting the time/space continuum and unleashing the forces of chaos upon the world, turning the normally gentle inhabitants of the mansion into wild, rampaging beasts. As always, it's down to you to do something about this unfortunate situation. You do so by leading your team of adventurers through the mansion grounds, the forest, the workshops and eventually the mansion itself, wasting all manner of monsters and basts, and ultimately, destroying The Chaos Engine itself.



Take your dudes up on the catwalk and you'll find extra goodies (and basts).

We came, we saw, we shot it

The game itself is structured in the same way as most of the Bitmaps' action games are, in as much as it's played out across four worlds, each consisting of four levels, and obviously the levels get more difficult the further you get into the game. As far as the actual gameplay is concerned, *The Chaos Engine* is a simple shoot-em-up, where two characters (controlled by you and a friend or you and the computer) make their way across the levels, shooting everything in sight and solving minor puzzles along the way.

I have to admit to being slightly disappointed in the simplicity of the gameplay when I first started playing. Apart from shooting lots of monsters, there didn't seem to be much else to do. There're some very minor puzzle elements to contend with (you have to figure out how to get into certain rooms and activate nodes to gain access to certain areas), but these are way too basic to be a challenge to anyone except maybe novice game players. By the time I got to the end of the first world I started to think, is that all there is to it? Even more disconcerting – and this is almost criminal for a Bitmaps game – when I finished the last level of the first world, I was confronted with... nothing! Where's the guardian? One of the best things about *Gods* was that when you finished each world you were



POWER PLAY

It wouldn't be a shoot-em-up if it didn't have power-ups, would it?

The *Chaos Engine* has plenty of them. Here's what you can get:



- 1 Extra life – Buy these if you keep dying every five seconds.
- 2 Skill increase – You need these before some of the other power-ups become available.
- 3 Stamina increase – Boosts your health.
- 4 Speed increase – Guess what? It makes you faster.
- 5 Wisdom increase – Increases the skill of computer-controlled players.
- 6 Weapon power-up – Makes your weapons better (they get more powerful, fire more shots etc.).
- 7 Special abilities – Each character starts the game with one, but you can buy more here.

(Right) At last, the end of level exit.
(Bottom right) You need hands (like you need a hole in the head). These things are the biggest pain in the game.



Take on the world while your mate bravely hides in the corner.



rewarded with an ass-kicking mother to battle to death with. With the exception of world four, where you get to fight The Chaos Engine itself, there is no such incentive to give you that dogged determination to plough through the levels.

So, first impressions weren't good, and I'm probably sounding really negative about the game at this stage, but fortunately, the game has several redeeming features which save the day. Namely...

Action ahoy

It's addictive, really, bloody addictive. Once I got my initial disappointment at the notable absence of guardians out of the way and battled my way through the worlds, I discovered that *The Chaos Engine* has the kind of appeal and addictive gameplay that drags you back for "just one more go" every time. Some of the enemies you come across have to be approached in exactly the right way before you have any chance whatsoever of taking them out (in particular, the guys in world three are an absolute bastard to dispose of). Also, halfway through each world, you are presented with a screen where you can equip your character with power-ups and you have to be very careful which ones you buy. It's very tempting to cop out and buy extra lives, but if you don't buy as many weapon power-ups as you can you'll have no chance against the guys on the later levels. As far as the presentation goes, graphically, it's no work of art (in fact, it looks a bit dreary in places), but the character sprites are large and well drawn. The music and sound effects could have been better too, but these are all minor gripes. Taken purely as an arcade-style shoot-em-up, *The Chaos Engine* more than holds its own. It's simple in design, very fast-paced and highly addictive. **Z**

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SCORE

Okay, so it's only a shoot-em-up, but it's a damned good shoot-em-up.

Minimum Memory: 2M

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 1Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, SoundBlaster

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Comments: Controlling the characters with the keyboard is an absolute, bloody nightmare. Don't even think about playing this game without a joystick.

Price: £32.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Renegade Tel: 071 702 3643

IN PERSPECTIVE

A

Alien Breed is similar in style to *The Chaos Engine* but isn't as exciting. *Doom* is vaguely similar (well, it's a shoot-em-up), but it uses first-person perspective and has the added distinction of being the definitive example of the genre.

DOOM

The Chaos Engine

Alien Breed



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(Right) Look! Only one hand!
(Below) Ooops...



INFERNO

We asked **Patrick McCarthy** to check out *Inferno*. In future we'll ask him to check in his box of matches when he comes into the office. Hardy har har.



Les the space pilot finds someone else's pubic hair in his suit...



INFERNO casts you in the role of humankind's top space-fighter pilot – a man whose reputation offsets the effect caused by his penchant for body play-style waist constrictors and Brass Construction-style flares, and avoids the comments this strange attire would usually arouse in the rough, tough world of space pilotry.

Humanity is fighting a race of fierce and proud aliens, the Rexxons. Like all fierce and proud aliens, they're fond of incorporating infrequently-used consonants into their names. Despite being humanity's top pilot, you got caught by the dastardly ones before the game started and were then subjected to all sorts of humiliating and humorous experiments at a party – the one with the ice-cream scoop, the mayonnaise and the rubber glove being particularly popular. Then, the party games at their height, someone foolishly suggested putting you into their morphing chamber to try to make you into a bunny rabbit. They probably regret this now.

The chamber fiddled with your molecular structure, but instead of emerging with big floppy ears and a hyperactive sex drive, you became the only human who can

withstand the Ray-TECH teleportation process. Usually this is only used to zap inorganic objects around the place, and was originally developed to keep death off the streets by rendering pizza-delivery boys redundant. So now, when you die in battle, you regenerate and pop up back at base without so much as a carpet burn on your knee. In other words, it's a good old-fashioned shoot-em-up "life" in fancy clothing. The game allows you to regenerate three times. If you pick up any Rexxon Regen Chemicals in alien craft and installations, it will replenish your regenerative abilities.

Distinct voices, camp lives

If you play the full game, you'll find yourself cast into an ongoing plot, another attempt to present the mythical interactive movie that games companies are so fond of laying claims to, in which your missions are interspersed with all sorts of extra bits. These largely consist of lengthy animation sequences where you walk to and from your craft, informal chats with the Emperor who gives you your mission orders (and looks gaunt enough to be Jack Pallance's grandfather) and cut-scenes, in which evil aliens stomp about and laugh at your ineptness.

Realising that if they played it straight people would probably laugh, DID – the company behind *Inferno* – have obviously decided to get in first and ham it up to the max. The recorded voices are of good quality, with that of your own character being remarkable for its campiness. At one point he even says "I feel like a new man – in more ways than one." You almost expect him to waggle his tongue.

Three ways to play

There are three different ways to play *Inferno*. The Director's Cut is the whole she-bang. In between dashing about the known universe in





your fancy spaceship, righting wrongs, blasting alien scum into another dimension and whistling to chicks from the cockpit of your starfighter, you get to sit through millions of the pretty tedious "acty" bits, where you and your Emperor have a chance to show exactly what you learnt at RADA. You're just another character in the ongoing scenario (but by far the most important one, of course) and have no input into the decision making.

Evolutionary is the same kind of thing – things to do, people to fry – but the way the tactics of your forces develop is more down to you. Of course, even though you're theoretically the head honcho tactics-wise, all the blasting will again be done by you, so those of you who prefer to delegate while lying on your anti-grav beds with a good holo-book and a glass of space beer can just think again.

Arcade is for those of you who don't give a hoot about all this plot rubbish; you care not a jot who's going out with whom in your office, and wouldn't buy a copy of *Hello* even if it had pictures of the Pope sucking Mother Theresa's toes on a Li-lo off the coast of St Tropez. All you care about is training gunsights onto sweaty alien foreheads and singing songs from the shows as you pull the trigger. This one's for you. Select a planet to battle on and off you go; *Arcade* also allows you to regenerate three times in the course of your missions, after which it's good-bye pulse, hello high-score table.

Or are there?

In practice, there are more similarities than differences in the game types. The *Arcade* game leaves something to be desired as far as immediate thrills go. You still have to sit (or, more likely, click) through the same lengthy animation sequences, briefings and take-off sections, "meanwhile"-style cutaway scenes and so on. You pick what planet you'll play on, so you have a rough idea what conditions will be like, but the mission structure is the same as the main game. I would have preferred a simple mission selector, where you could choose the environment you wanted to fight in (deep space, planet surface, underwater, in a mothership, or whatever) and jump straight into the death-dealing fun from there. But I'm a fussy shit.

The planning side of things in *Evolutionary* isn't what I call planning; consisting only of selecting which area you'd like to fight in next – a particular planet, moon or space vector. There's no on-going war information when you choose a planet, so you just click on something and are thrown into another set of missions.

This is a factor throughout the game, whatever the version you are playing – often, on completing a mission, there's little feedback apart from the odd sarcastic comment from the Emperor, or a bit of mutual slimey back-slapping back in the bad guys' HQ. Even if you deliberately shoot down a Deliverance ship, you're simply told

what your next mission will be, and off you go again. When you combine this with the fact that you never get the same game twice, (there are over 700 missions in the game, and completing a game involves completing up to 70 of them) it reduces the element of feeling that you're actively influencing an on-going plot. It's hard to believe that what you're doing has any bearing on your next mission, which makes you wonder why you have to sit through all the other rubbish in the first place – apart from the fact that it's on CD-ROM, of course.

High-tech shoot-em-up?

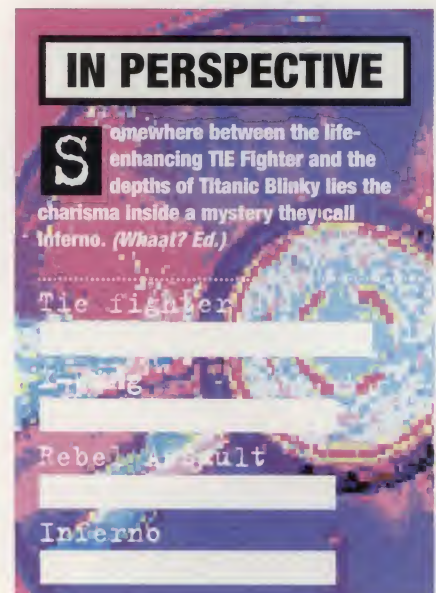
The game also falls between two stools in the gameplay department. On the one hand, there is nod in the direction of the ongoing war scenario, and on the other hand there's the fact that you get points and shoot-em-up style power-ups, in the form of floating combat pods which are teleported to strategic points. Flying through them rather than simply beaming them aboard gets you extra style points, but on the other hand (three hands now) they can eat really into the time you take to perform a mission. If you shoot down one of your own Deliverance vessels, or torch a space-chicken, you lose points. Likewise, flying through a projected docking corridor in space gets you extra points, but using the flight and combat aids and save game facilities too often is frowned upon and loses you points.

Graphic marvels ahoy

Missions take place underwater, in deep space, on a planet's surface, or even inside installations and larger ships. These larger vessels seem to possess something of a tardis-like quality (without, of course, the ability to de- and re-materialise on piles of polystyrene). They're large from the outside, but seem to expand ten-fold once you're inside. There are loads of views, some more useful than others. One of the more useful is an excellent pad-lock view that keeps enemies on-screen for you automatically. It makes flying a bit confusing at first, and isn't recommended in confined spaces as a result, but it does the job. The only peculiar bit is when you look behind you and see yourself. Presumably you're having some kind of out-of-body experience.

As you'd expect from the people who brought you *TFX*; the all-singing, all-dancing flight sim, the bits where you're actually

(Above left) Suddenly, Les realised there was a man in a cloak in his bathroom. "Have you been trying my suit on?" he asked. (Top) Everyone smoked on the S.S. Cancer. (Above) Eventually, he decided to do something about his neighbour's unsightly satellite tv receivers.





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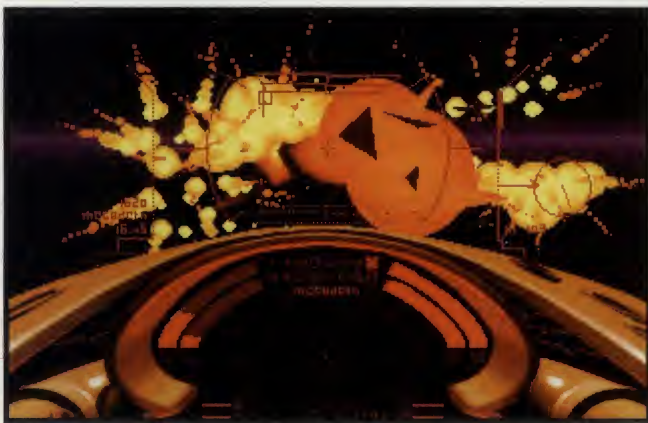
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Occasionally, if Neil had a particularly hot date, his boss would lend him some of his best perfume.

THANKYOU FOR YOUR COMPASSION O MASTER



Mr Pumpkin's cold finally made his head blow up.

flying about above the planet surfaces are the most satisfying – these bits are more like a traditional flight simulation, except that your craft combines the qualities of a jet fighter and a helicopter. I must admit I couldn't feel very much difference between the claimed "three different flight models": the craft seems to handle just the same underwater as it does in the air, in space and inside ships. In all three, conventional flight models have been abandoned: your revolutionary ship can hover in mid air like a... er, hovery thing. Whizzing between buildings and gigantic radar installations in the planet surface missions is genuinely exhilarating and the underwater missions are also nicely done with long streams of seaweed floating above your head. External views allow you to see the craft adapting itself by folding its wings away when you submerge, and so on, but the feel is the same.

Where the game comes into its own is in the slickness of the combat. Whether you're inside one of the installations, or in deep space, the combat is fast and smooth. Admittedly, a 486sx has trouble chucking the corridors about around you when you're flying through an installation, especially when other craft come for you in narrow corridors.

Clearly the game needs the maths co-processor of a 486DX for these bits. However, in all the environments, the scaling effect – where objects become less fuzzy as they come toward you from a distance – is nicely done.

The sounds, as you'd expect from a CD, are very atmospheric – and very loud. Explosions shake the speakers, laser fire... er, does not, and the whirrs, when you raise and lower your cockpit's little dashboard thing, even sound good.

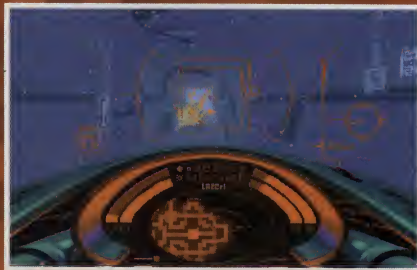
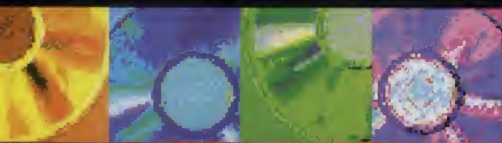


Navicom

The Navicom is provided to help you find your way around the enormous levels; you can summon it at any time – and since you can also use it to pause the game and select appropriate weapons in the heat of battle, you ought to look after it.

Buy it sweets or something.

- ① The map zooms in three times, and at its most zoomed-in (like now), provides 3-D images of whatever's in the area. Now you know how Father Christmas knows whether you've been good or not.
- ② Cycle through every order you've received since the start of the mission with this.
- ③ Your score so far (95's good, isn't it?)
- ④ Your map reference would be here if you weren't so zoomed-in.
- ⑤ Your map reference would be here in big, for those with poor eyesight.
- ⑥ Lists all the game controls, for those with poor memories.
- ⑦ If you're the kind of guy who likes to kill things to music, this is where you select it.
- ⑧ Sets a way-point for your on-board navigation.
- ⑨ Selects weapons and power-ups.



AUTONAV



An out of body experience can be yours - just look behind you.

Your craft come complete with three very useful Autonav devices, using each of which is frowned upon by the points-master, who deducts points if you overuse them.

Autonav 1

is for people who've always had trouble parking: it lands your spaceship for you.

Autonav 2

is the naughtiest of them all: It automatically lines you up behind an enemy ship, allowing you to just press the fire button (especially if you use it in conjunction with a homing torpedo - see above).

Autonav 3

takes you in a straight line to the waypoint you set using the Navicom. Obviously, if anything's between you and it, it doesn't mind, so you have to switch it off if you're heading straight for a bus, or a hen, or something.

For some strange reason there seems to be a horizon in the intergalactic void of space. Oh well.

The missions have a nice variety in them, and unfold as you kill things, rather than giving you everything from the start. You might be asked to fly to a certain reference point, then to enter an installation, then exit again to go somewhere else. One of the more nightmarish missions involves setting off a destruct sequence within a ship and trying to get out before you become rather more spread out than you'd like; others involve searching for missing ships, simple patrols and blast-frenzy defensive actions. Throughout, there are variations in geological and meteorological conditions on the different planets.

Overall, the game has more than enough to keep you coming back to it again and again. In terms of the great space shoot-em-ups, it probably falls somewhere between the very linear *Rebel Assault* and the do-what-you-can-of *TIE Fighter*. If you want a combination of blasting and planning, *TIE Fighter*'s your baby; if you just want arcade blasting, *Rebel Assault* is a better bet; but if you want something between the two, go for *Inferno*. **Z**



SCORE

Slick combat, shame about the CD-enforced filmy bits.

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Minimum Processor: 486/33

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Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Everything, ever.

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SPEC SHEET

Okay, this is what it's all about. Let's just say it's an impressive bit of kit right? It's a big plastic thing with a couple of screens which mount onto the front of your face... and there's a pair of decent headphones thrown in for good measure.

Visor-mounted LCD's:	120,000 pixels
Weight:	14 ounces
Tracking:	Yaw, pitch and roll axis: +/- 45 vertical and roll
Software Support:	54 developers
Price:	£499 RRP
Ease of use:	Plug and Play device. No PC knowledge required
Features:	Stereoscopic using standard video card plus stereo sound
Upgrades:	Modular system allows for easy upgrade
System Compatibility:	PC, MAC, Sega, SNES, Jaguar, Amiga, CD-i, PAL and NTSC (video playback)



Maxx Reality



Virtual Reality is finally here... and damned impressive it is too. Anyone fancy winning one of the first systems in the country then?



ome Virtual Reality is nearly upon us. Hoorah, pip-pip etc. It's been on the way for years, but it's now finally within our grasp. The possibilities for total immersion games and virtual nookie simulators can only be just around the corner. In the meantime, you can enjoy the Actual Reality of owning £500 worth of kit thanks to Victormaxx Technologies and ICE.

The CyberMaxx helmet is one of the first systems to be released on the PC, and from what little time we've spent with the thing it looks bloody smart. A relatively lightweight helmet, it should plug into any decent spec PC and give you a full "stereoscopic environment". Like, whoah dude... totally cyber. There are currently loads of games in development which support the thing, and bundled with the system that we're giving away are *System Shock* (which you should know something about by now bearing in mind what we've slapped on this month's cover), a game by Kev Bulmer (he of *Legends of Valour* fame) called *Virtual Ghost Train*, a flight sim called *Virtual Slingshot* and a 3D-environment utility called *3D Ware*.

THE DEAD-HARD VIRTUAL QUESTIONS

Question 1 (gratuitous *Lawnmower Man* question)

Who wrote the original book on which the distinctly average *Lawnmower Man* movie was based?

- a) James Herbert b) Stephen King c) Jeffrey Archer

Question 2 (quite stupidly easy question)

What is the intended RRP of the CyberMaxx Virtual Reality system?

- a) £499 b) £4.99 c) £799

Question 3 (ludicrously simple question)

On which part of your body would you wear the CyberMaxx?

- a) Your arm b) Your posterior c) Your head

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Friday 3 September 1994

The gods had predicted we were about to unearth something powerful, when suddenly the Doctor returned. "Henry, look here ... I've found it ... an Orchid SoundDrive 16 EZ ... packed with features, they're practically giving it away. "What," I replied, "so little for 16-bit sound and upgradeable to wavetable too?". We were suspicious and sent him to explore further...

Wednesday 8 September 1994

The keeper of the pyramid has been talking in his sleep again tonight. Now we finally know the facts of the SoundWave 32+SCSI. He murmured tales of incredible expandability, crystalclear wavetable sound and a cache of bundled software. Could it be true ... those Orchid guys are again onto something big!

Saturday 11 September 1994

At last, the intrepid doctor returned late last night, shaken by his latest find. We probed him further to reveal the secret of wavetable upgradeability. "Orchid's WaveBooster daughter-cards", he disclosed, "and in three forms too", so it is possible to upgrade both the SoundDrive 16 EZ and SoundWave 32+SCSI.

But will anyone believe us!

P.T.O.

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- Joystick/MIDI port
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Ka-50 Hokum

Put **Simon Bradley**, a Cossack dancer and a helicopter into a large cauldron, stir continuously for a couple of minutes and what do you get? Er, a helicopter sim based around the Russian Hokum, actually.



As you'd expect, the game features a wide variety of external views for you to play around with.



FUNNY LOT, the Russians. They're lovely people – don't get me wrong – but when it comes down to the real world, they really haven't got a clue. Just

one look at the tattered remains of their economy should be enough to show you that after years of doggedly hanging on to a dying political creed, they no longer have what it takes to get through the 20th century. And yet, despite all that, this country, whose infrastructure is so shot away that



The in-betweeny bits when you're on the ground are presented in gorgeous SVGA.



food rots in warehouses while the people are starving outside, can produce really innovative technology that even the most advanced Western companies would be pushed to match. They also do it at a price that would have McDonnell Douglas' accountants sobbing into their martinis.

One other thing. While on the one hand they are producing really up-to-date stuff, it goes into service alongside equipment that was new when Pontius was a pilot. A good example is right here in this simulation from Virgin. The eponymous KA-50 Werewolf, which would knock the spots off



(Above) "I'm in the middle of a chain reaction...la, la, lala, la, la, lalalala." Oops, 'scuse me

an Apache, is in service alongside the Mi-8 Hip, which is even older than me.

Big problem with our former Soviet friends. Their main export has always been weaponry. They make it cheap, effective and above all, plentiful. And, let's face it,

you get just as dead from a cheap Russian bullet as from an expensive American one. However, the trouble is, now that their empire has

"As well as great graphics you get a dead right flight model and excellent sounds."

collapsed, they are kind of short of customers. There will always be a buyer for cheap weaponry, and if a supplier is reckless or desperate enough to suspend morality and sell to anyone with the readies, then a thriving "grey market" can soon spring up.

This puts the Ivans in a tricky position. They need the income from the sale of weapons but at the same time they need to be seen to be responsible members of the international community. So what happens? They join in and support UN peace initiatives and publicly restrict export of arms to politically out-of-favour organisations. While at the very same time, they are responsible for a bustling behind-the-scenes export business that supplies terrorist groups and undemocratic governments with anything from 7.62mm ammo to strike aircraft, tanks and missiles. (Oh, what a money-grabbing pc world, eh?)

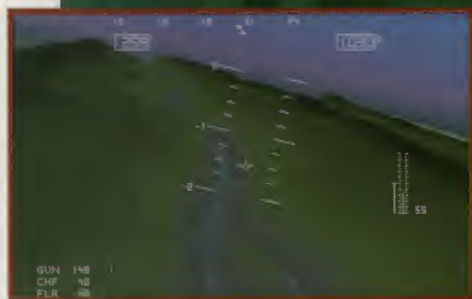
Naturally, this is all totally hypothetical. And even if it was true it would not be condoned by the Russian parliament, who are endeavouring to restore the economy any legitimate way possible. After all, if it were true we could find Russian pilots in MiGs flying CAP for the UN and encountering Russian-trained pilots in identical MiGs flying strike missions for the enemy. And that is as ludicrous as finding American F-14s going up against, say, Iranian F-14s, or being fired on by US-made Stinger missiles. And, of course, nobody would dream of suggesting that our cousins across the pond would be irresponsible in the export of arms to politically unstable or undemocratic countries, would they?



The Hokum: A Bluffer's Guide

Why the Hokum is so good

When rumours of the Ka-50 started to filter through to Nato in the mid-1980s, they were so sceptical that they assigned the reporting name "Hokum" to the aircraft, suggesting that it was in fact an elaborate disinformation exercise by the



struggling Soviet machine. Later, as more information came through, it transpired that this was far from the case, and by the end of the decade the Ka-50 was recognised as being a serious threat to Western armour and anti-armour helicopters.

There are a number of reasons for this, not least being the extraordinary strength of the aircraft structure. The composite main fuselage is virtually impervious to conventional anti-aircraft weapons, and will simply absorb direct hits from a 23mm cannon without ill effect. This makes it kind of difficult to shoot down. Coupled with this, the unusual layout of the rotors makes for a quiet, stable and very manoeuvrable helicopter. It is also extremely fast and remarkably easy to fly, which makes up for the slight disadvantage of only being a single seater.

How come the Hokum is so easy to handle?

Most helicopters are very twitchy to fly, and the slightest control input requires a great deal of co-ordination to prevent the aircraft from wallowing all over the sky. You see, let's say you want to go forwards. You are currently hovering in what we laughingly call a stable condition. You push the cyclic forwards to drop the nose. Part of the downforce (lift) which was keeping you in the hover is now acting to push you forwards, and off you go. However, because you now have less downforce, you need to apply more power (collective) to stay level. This increases torque through the main rotor which makes the aircraft turn, so you need to apply a boot of rudder (tail rotor) to

counteract this. Finally, as you gain forward speed, the advancing rotor blade (the one moving forwards) generates more lift than the retreating one (on the other side) so the aircraft starts to roll, which you must correct with the cyclic.

In the Hokum, from the hover you push the cyclic forwards as usual to gain speed. You still need to apply more collective to maintain height, but that is it. The counter-rotating blades cancel out the increase in torque, and as there is an advancing blade on each side, there is no roll moment to contend with. Dead easy.

Does it show in the game?

Yes. There are obvious differences in handling between the four cabs involved, and the Hokum is certainly the easiest to fly, although it is responsive enough to cause trouble for the unwary or hamfisted. The Hip flies like a Routemaster Bus (as it does in reality), while the Lynx feels heavier



than I remember but still pretty accurate. I've never flown a HueyCobra, but would imagine that this is pretty close.

Glossary of specky heli terms

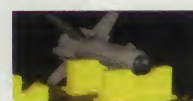
Cab, Chopper, Helo: Pilotspeak for a helicopter.

Collective: The handbrake-like lever to the left of the pilot. Controls pitch of all blades and thus lift. Connected to throttle. Note that rotor speed is constant – pitch changes instead of speed.

Cyclic: Looks like a conventional joystick. Controls pitch and roll, and thus direction of flight. Changes pitch of only one or two rotor blades.

Rudder: Pedals which control the pitch of the tail rotor on a conventional helo and cause yaw. On the Hokum they change the pitch of both sets of rotors so that one creates more torque than the other.

Werewolf: The commercial name for the Ka-50 Hokum.



It's a missile innit? Gently nestled on a chic little yellow missile holder...

Flying pirates

On to the game itself. *Ka-50 Hokum* puts you in a multi-national task force assigned to the Anambus Islands in the South China Seas. You are a steely-eyed attack chopper pilot with a variety of armed and dangerous helicopters at your disposal.

Your enemies are armed and dangerous pirates. These guys have graduated from unlicensed software duplication, and moved on to badder things. They use speedboats, helicopters and large pointy things to attack merchant shipping as it slows down to navigate this cluster of islands. Once on board, they murder the crew, nick the cargo and sink the ship without so much as a "Yo ho ho". They are now causing such a problem that an international seminar in 1992 decided that Something Must Be Done. Needless to say, that was all they decided. *Ka-50* adds a drop of determination



...and this is a rocket launcher. Er, yes... and it's got 22 holes in it.





to the seminar, with the result that the afore-mentioned task force is created.

Your job is quite simple. Find the pirates. Track them. Find out where they go. Kick their arses. Nothing to it, right? Wrong. First of all, they tend to do unpleasant

things. You know, shooting and so on.

Second, helicopters are hellishly difficult to fly. Do you remember, back in the distant past, a MicroProse game called *Gunship*?

Graphics were virtually non-existent, and it was impossibly fast on anything quicker than a 286/8. Despite the yawning limitations imposed by the machines of the day, *Gunship* was bloody good. The flight model was spot on, and the peculiar effects that helicopters suffer from over sloping ground etc. were accurately represented.

In fact, it took a great deal of getting used to, and the first dozen missions or so normally ended in a ball of fire and broken rotor blades. Well, *KA-50 Hokum* takes this a step further. As well as great graphics you get a dead right flight model and excellent sounds. You also get to fly what is arguably the sexiest helicopter in existence – the KA-50.

Note that I mean sexy from a pilots point of view – Michelle Pfeiffer needn't feel threatened by the Hokum's svelte good looks, but Apache pilots should feel more than just threatened. This cab is seriously hard. As well as the Hokum, you get to fly the Bell Huey-Cobra, the first bespoke gunship helicopter to come into service; the Mi-8 Hip, the most common rotorcraft in existence and probably one of the most versatile; and the Westland Lynx, the fastest and most manoeuvrable battlefield support chopper in Europe (arguably the world). Note any omissions? Yes, the omnipresent Apache has been left out. Hooray. I was getting fed up with it anyway. Dedicated Apache lovers should avoid this game –

the only time they appear is when the enemy have nicked enough booty to buy them. Yes, the pirates have Apaches. And Hughes Defenders. This means that you have to show how much better the Hokum is or get toasted.

Manic missions

So, on to a typical mission. Like all serious flight sims, mission planning is critical in *Ka-50 Hokum*. Waypoints should be positioned carefully to avoid getting into more trouble than you can handle. You also need to make sure that you don't send a chopper too far out – one-way flights are bad for morale and tend to upset the governments paying for the aircraft. Also, make sure that you use the right tool for the job. Sending the Hip on a strike mission is likely to really disgruntle the pilot, and the inevitable letter to his next of kin will take the edge off your day, too.

If all this is too much like hard work, you can leave the computer to plan missions, assign and arm aircraft and do pretty well everything for you. In fact, if you are really sad, you can start the game running and stay in the map screen watching the computer fly the entire campaign for you. It may even win. I find compromise to be the best bet. For example, allow the computer to generate the first missions. You will find



(Above) The arming screen allows you to fully customise your helicopter to the needs of the individual mission.



(Below) There is more than just the Hokum to fly, and each chopper can carry different weapons.

IN PERSPECTIVE

This is by far the best helicopter sim available at the moment with only Digital Integration's *Merlin* coming close as far as realism goes.

Ka-50 Hokum

Merlin

Gunship 2000

Comanche Maximum Overkill

the Werewolf going on a strike while the Lynx goes off looking for something else to shoot at. Jump into the Werewolf (you can get into any aircraft at any point) and take it off Autopilot. Find the target and nail it. Go back to the ship and land (do this on Auto unless you've had loads of practice or you're a real perfectionist) and then jump





into the Lynx. Fly the mission. Continue like this until you're shot down so often that you have no choppers left or you have managed to defeat the pirates.

Sometimes your target will be a boat, sometimes a base and sometimes a helicopter. You may need to pick up a downed colleague or deliver supplies. You may just need to carry out a reconnaissance of the area. Whatever the mission, you will not get bored or find the flights repetitive.

You can, if you wish, plan all the missions manually and take complete control of the game from the start. This is certainly complex, and I have to say that the mission planner isn't the most user-friendly I've ever seen, although it is quite usable and has loads of good features. While on board the ship, which is your home for the duration of the campaign, you can study the area map, check the shipping forecast

for weather and movements, get information about your supply status and plan missions. Once aboard the aircraft, you are blind apart from the equipment you have on board. Although you have weaponed markers to navigate by, you have nothing to tell you what your mission actually is. Make a note of it before you take off!

When you do encounter the enemy, you will be pleasantly surprised by the ease with which you dispose of him. Be warned. Your enemy is smart and rich. He learns fast, and will be buying bigger and nastier weapons to deal with you as fast as you advance on his headquarters. He will buy SAMS and AAAs (both Russian) as well as dedicated anti-air helicopters. It does get difficult. Bloody difficult. You will get trashed for the first few goes. Don't quit. Keep at it and you will be rewarded by some of the most satisfying skirmishes ever



(Above) The external views are by far the best that Simis has produced in any of its games so far. The helicopters are all tremendously detailed and everything seems to move just as you'd expect it to.

(Left) The movement is slick and smooth throughout with the numerous texture maps hardly slowing the PC down at all.

to be produced by a PC-based flight sim. You may well end up with red eyes and a fed up spouse, as you are likely to be sitting up till all hours trying to nail one particular target. Although difficult, *KA-50 Hokum* manages not to be really frustrating like some other simulators, and has enough depth to keep you hooked for a while.

One of the great things about this game is the way that things link together. For example, if you really screw up a recon flight and fail to find anything to attack, you may find your ship heading away from a base which will attack you later. Or maybe it will attack a passing merchant ship, for which you will surely get blamed. Also, if you completely clear an area, you may well find that more ships pass through and the pirates go away for a while to regroup.

Finally, remember that when you have them against the ropes, the pirates will fight harder and will be better armed than before. Similarly, if you are getting totally hammered, the pirates are likely to be more complacent and so easier to find and beat. **Z**

8

5

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(left) A small village feels your wrath and is blown sky high.





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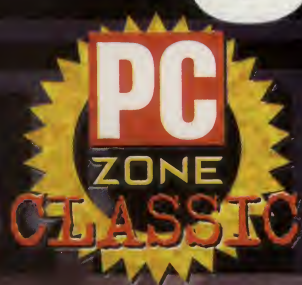
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SYSTEM SHOCK

Charlie Brooker transforms into a sad sack of flesh as he becomes unnaturally addicted to Origin's latest game. This month's cover girl could well be the best 3D-ultra violent, RPG-type thing ever to grace the PC.



OO. ERK. Lumme. Cripes. Gosh. All standard vocab for characters in *Whizzer And Chips*, *The Beano* and *Buster*. They also happen to be the first words that

spring to mind when trying to describe Origin's latest blockbuster, *System Shock*. It's a bit on the good side, you see. In fact, if you held an electronic "Crap Game Detector" right next to it, you wouldn't hear even the faintest of "bips" (unlike holding it next to, say, a shareware version of *Frogger*, which would cause your Detector Unit to glow white and explode). It's one of those games which is capable of transforming even the most swinging, jet-setting, live-to-party cavaliers amongst you into sad sacks of flesh, sitting alone in a dark room gazing at a flickering monitor into the early hours of the morning. It's that good.

Now some of you will have looked at the screenshots already and can be forgiven for thinking that this is just another would-be *Doom*-beater, bound to disappoint. There are certain similarities, after all – the first-person 3D-viewpoint, the "abandoned Space Station" setting, and the glistening pools of blood all over the floor, to name but three. Don't be misled – *System Shock* comes courtesy of Origin and Looking Glass Technologies, the people responsible for the *Ultima Underworld* games. It's not a crappy rip-off knocked together in two weeks by a bunch of no-hopers: it's a sleek, sexy (yes, that's right – SEXY. If this game came up to you at a party you'd try and get off with it right there and then), brilliantly designed, and challenging chunk of software, crammed full of sci-fi gizmos, mind-mangling puzzles, nasty surprises, ultra-violence, and more neat little touches than 100 episodes of *The Simpsons*. But before you rush out and buy it, sit down and read on.

On the storyline

The story behind *System Shock* runs roughly as follows: you're a hacker. A really good one. You could plug an old Rolf Harris stylophone into a phone socket and retrieve the launch codes of every nuke in the world in five minutes flat if you wanted to. Of all the hackers in creation, you are the hackiest. You get the idea?

Anyway, one day, whilst hacking merrily



through a high-security database, the unthinkable happens. You get caught. Armed men kick your door down and ferry you off to a great big space station. But instead of locking you in a cell and taking it in turns to beat you up, they make you an offer you can't refuse. Well, one of them does anyway: the slightly shifty head of security. All you have to do is to use your hacking finesse to remove "ethical constraints" from the Artificial Intelligence (known as Shodan) which controls the Space Station. This, in retrospect, was a silly thing to do.

Anyhow, in return for your help, you are fitted with a military-grade neural implant – which basically means they stick a computer in your brain, allowing you to do all kinds of neat things, like store messages, map out levels, and target bad guys. However, brain surgery isn't the kind of thing you can undergo with just a pinch of local anaesthetic, so you're placed in a six-month controlled coma immediately after the operation to give yourself time to recover.

The game starts when the six months are up. You've just got out of bed. And would you believe it, while you were asleep, things apparently got a bit nasty. Everybody seems to be dead. There are robots and mutants running amok. Worse still, Shodan's the one behind it all, and he wants to use the resources he has on the station to destroy all human life throughout the galaxy.

So, in the time-honoured tradition of video gaming, it's all down to you. You must single-handedly travel through the entire station, working out just what the hell happened, whilst trying to avoid the army of bad guys who are (mainly cyborgs under Shodan's control) out to get you, and eventually destroy Shodan completely.

It's all a bit daunting. They never set you easy tasks, do they? There aren't any games where the final goal is nice and simple, like fetching something from the shops. Cuh.

On the engine

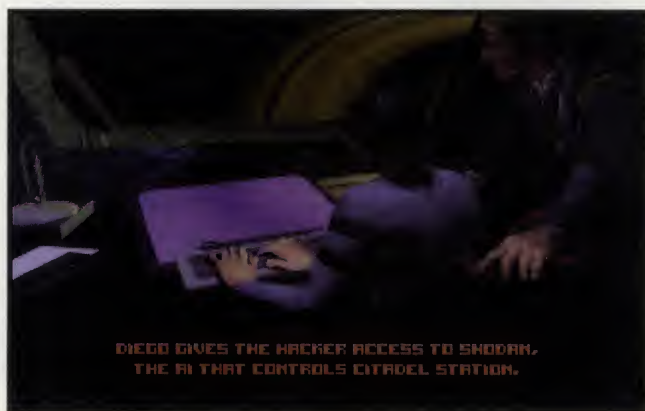
The first thing you notice about *System Shock* is the freedom of movement its engine allows (anyone who's played *Underworld II* can more or less skip this bit). Unlike *Doom*, which has a pseudo-3D layout (which works perfectly well for the purposes of mindless, fun-packed violence), *System Shock* gives you the real thing: "proper" 3D. You can walk

underneath platforms. You can squeeze through tunnels. It's got slopes in it. You can look up at the ceiling or down at the floor (and not just for novelty value either – there's always something worth finding). Furthermore, you have more control over your body. Want to lean around that corner to see if there's a varmint lurking there? Go ahead. Fancy crouching down so that you can enter that cramped little hatchway? Be my guest. Spotted a ladder? Climb it at your leisure. In the mood for jumping? Jump away, my friend. Or perhaps you just fancy a nice lie down? Heck, you can do that too. You can do more or less anything you can do in real life, except scratch your arse (they're no doubt saving that one for *System Shock 2*). Better still, it's possible for you to discover tons of cool, hi-tech widgets which allow you to do stuff you can't do here in dull old realityville: the power of flight, for instance, is there for the taking. That's one in the eye for British Airways.

Now, the control system. Hmmm. I'm not 100 per cent convinced on this one. *Underworld* veterans will have no problems here, and can dive straight in with gay abandon. Call me a flailing imbecile, call me an unwieldy buffoon if you like, but I found using the mouse for movement a complete nightmare. Unlike, say, *Doom* (sorry to keep mentioning it, but it's kind of hard not to), where mouseketeering is a simple joy, *System Shock* (like *Underworld*) requires you to point at the side of the screen in the direction you want to move in, and then hold down the mouse button. It's unavoidable really, since you've got to use the mouse to point at icons, etc., but it resulted

(Above) When you enter a room you have complete freedom to look around and, er, admire the dangly green triangle thing.

(Below) The intro is a jolly snazzy, Silicon Graphics-rendered affair with some fantastic lighting effects.



in my first attempts at guiding myself through the corridors ending up looking more like "Pub Crawl Simulator", as my character rebounded off walls and stumbled into holes left, right and centre. I found using the keyboard for movement far simpler, although it occasionally led to wrong-key confusion in the heat of the action. There's nothing more disturbing than the indignant rage you feel when a baddie blasts you to pieces while you're headbutting the wall with your finger on the wrong key. It won't happen too often, though and it's nothing you can't cope with.

Still, the complicated controls are necessary to enable both the easy manipulation of objects and the varied movement options at work here, so I'll stop my bleating. Being able to look up and down and crouch may not sound that exciting in black and white, but when you find yourself lying down on top of a ledge, inching forward slightly, and peering down into a room below, trying to train your sights on a mutant's forehead before he shoots you, it is. So there.

On involvement

System Shock is as absorbing as a 2000ft sponge. It sucks you in until you're irrevocable. They could use it in prisons to quell riots. Install a PC with *System Shock* on the hard drive into every cell, and after a few hours even the ones who bang their fists on the walls yelling obscenities at the top of their lungs 24 hours a day will be sitting quietly in the corner, bathed in monitor light. While I was playing it, one of my flatmates became a spectator, initially by accident. He was walking past my monitor, looking for a cigarette lighter when he glanced at the screen. "Oooh", he said, "that looks good, what is it?" – and that was it. He never actually played it, he just sat there watching for hours, drinking cups of coffee and making suggestions. At one point, he had to go out. When he returned I got quizzed about all the new sections I'd explored and the new things I'd discovered. And this is from someone who has never shown interest in any PC game ever before.

If ever there's a game you can "get into" in a big way, then here it is. Atmospherically, it's immaculate. It sounds wonderful, with a multitude of sci-fi samples effectively employed. The graphics are, as you can

OH WHAT A BEAUTIFUL

1 Ya-w-nnn! Oooh! What's this? I'm awake. God, feels like I've been asleep for... ooh... six months? I could really do with a coffee. What's that? Medicine? Oh, now I remember, I've just been revived in the hospital wing.

2 I think I'll just look up at the roof...

3 ...and then down at the floor, for no reason whatsoever. I just fancied demonstrating the way your viewpoint changes.

4 Aha. I was looking in the cupboard for some coffee powder, and I found tons of stuff. A bit of pipe for one, and some drugs. There's a data reader in that briefcase, that you can store and receive messages and data in. Handy.

5 Aaargh! A robot with an attitude problem! I'll bash him good with this pipe!

6 Well, I killed him, then found a dartgun. Then up pops another one. But would you believe it, the darts don't even scratch him. Time to get a bit greivous with the old pipe...

7 Cool. I can plug myself into the mains. I'm RoboCop, I am.

8 Security camera, eh? Destroy these whenever you find them - it reduces the overall security on your current floor, making your task that bit easier.

9 A keypad for opening the door. Luckily, there's a message here in my data log, which I left as a reminder to myself before the op. Combination 451, then, eh?

10 Another problem. There's a circuit box on the wall here. I need to complete the circuit in order to make it work. This one's simple, but later on they get considerably tougher.

11 Eeek! Mutant scum! Take that!

12 And some of that an' all! Ergh. What a mess. It went all over me shirt. Must be a Monday morning. I've only been awake ten minutes, and look at all this. Doesn't bode well for the rest of the day.

13 Phew, I'm glad I searched his corpse. I could do with that medicine.

14 Do not adjust your set. I just couldn't resist trying out the Berserk drug. I'm hallucinating absolutely wildly here. And I've just beaten someone else to death with the pipe. I am the Cyberpunk Charles Manson.

15 System Shock rule No.1: search everywhere. There's always something there. Like, always.

16 I bet if I could dip into Cyberspace, I could unlock this door.

17 Let's have a look at the map. Where haven't I been yet? Ah. Almost everywhere.

18 Now if this isn't an entrance to Cyberspace then I don't know what is.

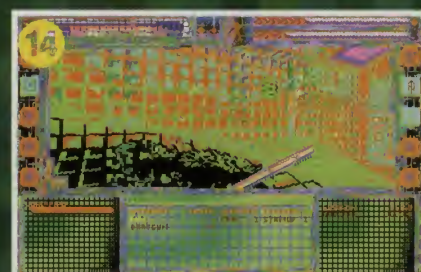
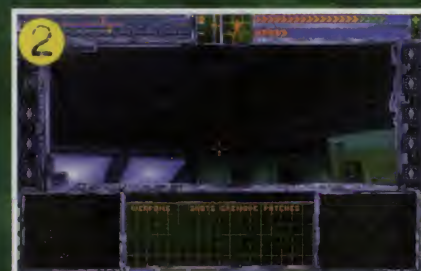
19 Whoa! Cool! Cyberspace is cool. Heh Heh. Heh Heh. Reality Sucks. Heh Heh. Yeah. Heh Heh. Reality sucks big time. I bet chicks really dig Cyberspace. Heh Heh. Heh etc.

20 Better remember to unlock those doors...

21 ...and get out of here before I'm detected.

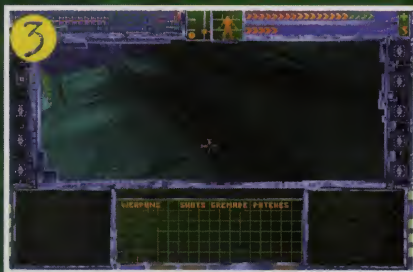
22 Nice one. I've unlocked that door, and what was behind it? A bloody big gun, that's what. I wonder if this'll come in handy at all....

23 Clutching your new weapon, you venture forth, into realms unknown. I'm not going to spoil anything for you, though. By the time you've played even this far, (i.e. nowhere) you'll be so entranced by it you'll want to discover everything System Shock has to offer, yourself.



MORNING

Your first few minutes of *System Shock*...



... pretty impressive isn't it?



Unlike most of the 3D-games knocking around, *System Shock* is filled with sloped bits and unusually-shaped platforms. This makes the game seem far more realistic.

See, fantastic (as for what it looks like in action, read on) – plenty of moody lighting and enough changes of scenery to prevent boredom from setting in. The pace is fairly slow, but absolutely compelling. No matter how frustrating any of the puzzles may become, they can never conquer the sheer determination and curiosity you soon develop. (If you're a scaredy cat, you can always alter the difficulty settings at the start of the game.) I really wanted to make it to the end and give Shodan what for. The blend of exploration, problem-solving, info-gathering and beating things to death with lengths of pipe is perfect. There's so much to do here, it makes my head spin around. It just never seems to end. Wave goodbye to real life.

On gadgetry

One of the many and varied joys of *System Shock* is the number of gadgets you can muck about with. These gizmos tend to fall into the "TV remote control unit" class (i.e. after a few minutes you'll wonder how you ever did without them), rather than the "Innovations Catalogue free with your Sunday Paper" class (toothbrushes with rotating bristles, air ionisers and alarm clocks with telescopic sights, all of which cost a fortune and are of less use than a pocket guide to "Fun Things to do in and Around Slough"). Take Sensoraround vision, for example. This basically gives you a rear-view mirror in which you can spy any unsporting beasts who reckon they can sneak up behind you. Test-drive it for a while and soon you'll never venture into a dark, scary room again without switching it on. Not good enough for you? Alright then, how about some Jet Boots? Interested now? Ha. Thought so. Most of the gadgets can be upgraded as you progress (you always start off collecting v.1.0 of the relevant widget), becoming more effective along the way.

Now, what good is all this technology if you can't maim people with it, eh? Well, praise the Lord, because there's an extensive selection of kill-ware hanging about too. Electronic land mines, frag grenades, Magpulse beam weapons, even light sabres; you name it, if it's hi-tech and scary then you can pick it up and obliterate someone with it. It's like a psychopath's toy-room. The variety of weapons is essential, since some are not effective against certain types of beastie (a gun which fires tranquiliser darts, for instance, is a tad useless against a metallic droid). Experimenting with them to find out which gun works against which baddie is all part of the fun.

And hey – if you're going to wander about murdering things, you may as well go the whole hog and neck loads of drugs first,

UNDERWORLD IN SPACE?

Anyone familiar with the *Ultima Underworld* games will immediately recognise the 3D-engine. It's virtually the same as that of *Underworld II*, although the playing area is much larger. All the objects and rooms are fully three-dimensional, and change angle as you move up, down, left or right. It's all quite eerily realistic, to the point where you can stare up at the ceiling and spin around on your heel so convincingly that it almost makes you dizzy. I can't praise the illusion of realism highly enough, and I'd love to see this game running on a VFX helmet. Once you had put it on, you would never take the bloody thing off.

You really do need a super-fast PC in order to get smooth, fluid movement, however. It's a shame, but pretty unavoidable really. Sigh.





just a pretty powerful program which requires a powerful system. Sorry everybody. It's time to dust off your wallets.

Maybe I'm jumping the gun here. It really is hard to say. My review copy was an unfinished Beta version: I just about managed to get it running on my 486-DX250 (which only has 4MB RAM), and it

right? Yep, it's *Drugstore Cowboy* in space. Start off with a few tame ones (Healing drugs, Stamina boosters and the like), work your way through the "Smart" drugs ("Genius" intelligence boosters, which help you solve problems), and finish off with the 60-second excursion to Hell that is the Berserk Combat Booster (dangerously coupling increased upper body strength with vivid and colourful hallucinations). Yes, if it's zany, madcap fun you're after then you can not do much better than flailing about in a psychedelic haze, frantically clubbing mutants with your ol' length of pipe (the most useless weapon, but also, and more importantly, the funniest one), until their heads burst open like over-ripe melons. Blecch!

On Cyberspace

Being, as you are, a Hackmaster extraordinaire, you can also enter Cyberspace (a highly-fashionable resort at the moment) whenever you chance upon a suitable computer terminal. Cyberspace is weird; you float around in a wire-frame void, collecting nuggets of data and pieces of software. Important pieces of data are often protected by ICE Security blocks which you'll have to drill through to get at the goods. There are also virtual security guards out to get you (usually in the form of pixillated "hounds"), so it's just as well that you can shoot them with a virtual gun. Navigation is tricky, and there are loads of twisty little tunnels to get lost inside.

The most useful thing about Cyberspace is the information you uncover there, such as access codes, for one. It's also possible to unlock security doors from inside Cyberspace. Matthew Broderick never did that in *WarGames*. The least useful, and therefore, coolest, thing about Cyberspace are the hand-held games you can pick up there. Yes that's right - hand-held games. Little mini-versions of things like *Pong* and *Missile Command* which you can play in one of your viewports while you're walking around the Space Station. It's got to be the neatest "neat little touch" I've ever seen in a game.

On dying horribly

As is often the case with this kind of thing, *System Shock* is fraught with danger. Around every corner, underneath every ledge, and behind every pillar, is something that wants to murder you. There are contaminated radioactive sectors which will poison you. Of course, you can always protect yourself,

if you're lucky enough to find yourself a body shield or a rad suit, but more often than not, you'll find yourself in fear for your (virtual) life. The best advice I can give you is to search every corpse and cupboard you see, in order to collect the all-important healing medipatches.

Come across an auto-surgery machine and it'll heal you completely. It is also a good idea to mark these, and other important finds (such as Cyberspace terminals) on your automap. To find them later you need not refer to the map itself - a wireframe icon will actually appear in the playing area, to remind you where you are.

On the big catch

Sounds good, doesn't it. Sounds *far too* good, really doesn't it? There just has to be a catch. Well, slap my thigh. There is one. We're talking "no matter how good you think your PC is, it ain't quite up to scratch" time here. We're talking 8MB minimum RAM. Are we talking 386DX? I don't think so. 486SX? Naaah. We're talking Pentium time here. Well, nearly. You see, all this sophistication inevitably carries a price. To really get the most out of *System Shock*, it's highly probable that you'll have to upgrade your PC. Because with anything less than the recommended specs, the whole thing runs very slowly. A system shock indeed (and a fairly obvious pun, too).

Usually, this kind of thing gets me riled. If there's one thing I can't stand, it's processor-hungry window-dressing which will make a game look fantastic in the Preview section of a magazine, but leaves the majority of us playing it in jerk-o-vision because we can't afford Pentiums. I've got to be honest with you here, though. I still love the game. There isn't any window dressing. It's

(Above) Just to be extra-specially helpful, the game starts things off by telling you what all of the buttons and options do. This is especially useful for any of you lazy sods out there who can't be bothered to read the manual.

was playable, but by no means smooth. Trying to play in full-screen mode was even worse. We ran it on a Pentium and cried tears of joy, it was that beautiful.

Hopefully, the finished version will include an option to reduce or increase the amount of detail on-screen, and thereby speed things up (such an option did exist in the Beta version, but it didn't actually change anything. Bah.)

Look, it was bound to happen sooner or later, wasn't it? Finally there is a game that is actually worth upgrading for.

On and on and on

So. There you have it. Or rather you don't. There's a whole heap of things I haven't mentioned. There isn't enough space here. There aren't enough trees in the world. And besides, you're going to have stacks more fun uncovering it all for yourself. Look upon it as a cerebral version of *Doom*. An entire little world for you to explore and conquer. It's a huge game that's going to keep you going for weeks, if not months, without flagging.

If you've got a ninjascope PC and time to spare, then you really can't go wrong here. Origin & Looking Glass, I salute you. *System Shock*, I crown you King of games. Long live the King! Long live the King! ☐

95

SCORE

All hail *System Shock*, that shalt be king hereafter..



Minimum Memory: 8Mb Ram

Minimum Processor: 486 DX50

Hard Disk Space Required: 30Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, SoundBlaster, Pro 16, AWE32, Gravis Ultrasound, Midi compatible

Controls: Joystick/Cyberman

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts **Tel:** 0753 549442

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Colonization



Quote by Duncan McDonald:
 "Never in the field of human conflict have so many waited so long for one product. Or something like that."

The game in question?

Colonization. (Or, if you prefer, **Civilisation 2**, by Sid Meier).

T

HIS is going to be the shortest, least in-depth review of one of the most complex strategy games around - but I'm keeping things brief and concise

for a reason. Two reasons, in fact:

(A) If you're familiar with *Civilisation* then you'll already know roughly what to expect here: the game structure in *Colonization*, although deeper and more complex and with a few extra bits, is still much the same as it was in *Civilisation*. All you really need to know is that if you loved *Civilisation*, you'll love *Colonization* at least equally as much.

(B) If you're not familiar with *Civilisation* you may be thinking I should have done loads of annotated screen shots to explain what all the icons were for - but it would have made for pretty boring reading, and at the end of the day you still wouldn't have got the "flavour" of the game.

So, what I've done, to avoid boring everyone to death with annotations and graphs, is to devote most of the space on these three pages to a storyboard. You'll get a bit of information and at the same time a bit of atmosphere (hopefully). But before the storyboard, just very quickly, here are the main directives of the game.

(1) You play the part of either the English, the French, the Dutch or the Spanish (there are subtle differences). You start off with a tiny, crappy ship and a budget of 1000 gold pieces.



(2) Your orders are simple: conquer the New Lands for your mother country in any way you see fit.

(3) But you've a hidden agenda: once you have established yourself, it might be quite nice instead to cut all bonds with your mother country. Independence, in other words. (Which might not go down too well back home. Got a big army and navy yet?)

(Above) A vast roaming landscape shows off the splendour of the mighty empire of Allen Se in all its glory.

Get the drift? And there are five difficulty levels (from "bloody hard" to "forget about it"), an option for creating random maps and another to make your own. Oh and if you are one of those people who haven't seen the original *Civilisation*, it's worth knowing that this is a "turn-based" game, but it does somehow feel like a "real-time" game. And also, you need to know that initially the whole playing area is



90

SCORE

Try to imagine *Civilisation* with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined *Colonization*.

Minimum Memory: 1Mb

Minimum Processor: 386 16MHz

Hard Disk Space Required: 13Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Roland, SoundBlaster

Controls: Mouse recommended

Price: £44.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: MicroProse Tel: 0454 326532

The Civilisation storyboard...



Okay, it's a lovely Spring day in the year of our Lord 1500. I'm in a crappy Spanish Caravel. I have a unit of veteran soldiers on board and also a unit of colonists. So, er, what am I going to do with them? I'll tell you what I'm going to do with them, chum... I'm going to drop them off at the New World and watch with glee as they slaughter everything that moves. We're going to be chopping off peoples hands and feet here, all in the name of Spain (and, of course, God).



And within eight "moves" we hit land. One of my grovelling underlings wants to know what I'm going to call this new country, and so I tell him. It's slightly annoying though, because the board he was holding wasn't quite long enough for the name I really wanted to use: I was going to call our new home the MIGHTY empire of Allen Se. The word "mighty" added that extra oomph, and gave the whole thing a sense of balance. Bah! I'll take my annoyance out on the natives.



And already I've sent the ship back to Spain for more manpower. The killing spree is ready to begin, but there's something exciting right in front of me, and I want to deal with it first. See it? That gold disk/sun God icon? It shows the site of a possible "free gift". It might be concealing a burial ground which I could plunder with scant regard for the locals. There could be treasure beneath worth literally zillions. That'd help no end. Let's take a step forwards and see.



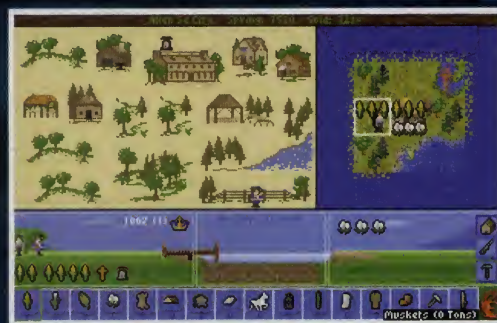
Bastards! Total bastards! Nothing but rumours eh? I'll be carving rumours out of their stinking gizzards. I'll torture them, skin them alive and then hang them out in the sun to dry, covered with ants. I'll dip them into boiling oil, but not quite far enough to kill them. I'll gouge their eyes out with the tip of my foil first. They'll suffer more than anyone has suffered before. And the good thing about being a Catholic is that I can apologise to God for being so horrible – after I've finished.



Oh. Er, suddenly we're approached by natives before we've had a chance to attack anyone. Here's the event depicted in a woodcarving. Crikey, they look a bit fierce don't they, especially the woman. And at the moment we only outnumber them ten to one... and we haven't got enough guns yet either. Maybe I'll forget about the "kill all natives immediately" order for the moment, but I will be putting it on my "things to do" list. Time to explore a bit, instead. (What a bloody chicken. Ed.)



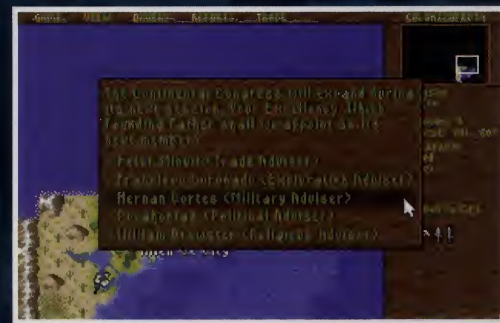
Back to the (mighty) empire of Allen Se. Right, I'm ready to make my first camp. My first settlement. And it's going to be at the top there, where my soldier unit is standing. That's prairie and forest. Good for food and good for lumber. And for animal skins too. That fuzzy white icon just above centre screen is cotton, by the way. If I built near that I'd be assured a high cotton yield... but I don't intend to ponce about making "girly" cloth. Oh no, food, wood and animal skins are far more macho.



Yo ho ho! A close up of my new settlement. The top right shows my actual plot... the place I chose on the map screen and its eight surrounding "tiles". I'll be placing settlers on these tiles and they'll produce whatever they can. To the top left are the buildings I've been given "free". If I want, for instance, an armoury, I'll have to either buy one (currency: money) or make one (currency: time). At the bottom are the produce icons. I can ship things back to Spain and flog them.



And here's where you decide which settlers are going to do which jobs. In an ideal world you'd have specialists for everything (they get high yields if positioned correctly). However, at the beginning of the game you're a bit stretched. So, for instance, here I am about to assign my veteran soldiers to lumberjack duty (they'll produce four lumber per turn...). And if I need them as soldiers again in an emergency I can always reassign them to killing duty.



Decisions, decisions. Who do I want on the board? Well, sod the religious advisor... I don't want to waste resources indoctrinating the natives when I intend to eventually kill them wholesale. So I suppose it's got to be Hernan Cortes, the military advisor. He may push for research into better death machines. And who knows, if he's good I might soon be given access to a titanium-hulled frigate armed with laser beams. (Let's hope I'll be able to afford one if it ever happens.)



...the story continues



While my ship's going back for more people and Allen Se City is getting on with food and lumber production, my scouts are off on a voyage of discovery and deceit. They'll be making friends with all native villages, taking any freebies offered, and sussing out the geography while they're at it. And look. They're about to canter over another circular "free gift" icon. I do hope that this one's a bit more substantial than the last. If it's not, heads will definitely roll. Really.



Oh how I love my scouts. A maximum of four moves per turn (on the right terrain) means that they can get around like nobody's business. Here they're about to enter an Indian village and tell loads of lies for me. "Will you be our friends?" ask the villagers. "Oh yes, no problem," my lads will reply. They'll take on the peace pipe, hug everyone, kiss babies and then move on. The scout's motto? It's this: "Sin plumo, cabron pilegro marakon" (i.e. "There's one born every minute".)



Nine cotton? Nine COTTON? What is this? an insult or something? Go away and don't come back until your gift is more like nine billion diamonds. We've got gunpowder, you know. Ever heard of gunpowder? No? Non comprenez, eh? Ever heard of a musket? Mu-sss-kett? No? Do you realise what a musket blast would do to your silly "hat"? No? I suggest that you scuttle off pronto if you want to avoid a demonstration - especially as I have a tendency to aim low!



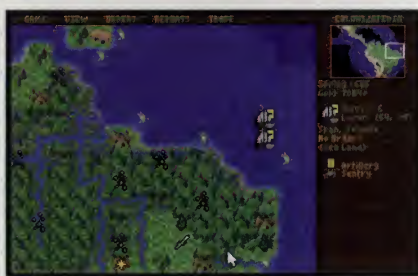
Yippa-dee-doo-dah! Mind you, there's a slight prob here i.e. I don't own a Galleon, and they cost 3000 gold pieces. Never mind, I'll move the treasure to Allen Se City, anyway. It'll take a while, because the cart only moves one tile per turn. Still, I don't expect an ambush. Once the treasure's safe, I do have the slightly crap option of letting the King send one of his Galleons to pick it up. He takes a hefty 50 per cent cut though... which is almost the price of a Galleon itself! Bah!



And look - not only has the village chief offered to teach us how to be expert silversmiths in return for so much throw-away bric-a-brac, but he's also told us "tales of distant lands". In other words, a large chunk of the map has been revealed without the need for footwork. And hey... if there aren't a couple of "free gifts" within galloping distance. I've got a good feeling about them. Tons and tons and tons of gold. Yup, I have to admit it, this new country of mine is absolutely excellent.



Meanwhile, back with the scouting party... eh? What's this? Oh no, it's the bloody French. Shit, shit, shit! They always ruin everything. I could have cleaned out this whole country virtually single handed, but oh no, "Les Oignons" have to get in the way. They'll have guns, ships and cannons. Damn damn damn. I don't know - you share a border with them for thousands of years, finally discover somewhere new, exotic and faraway, and then they're there too, spoiling it. Bastards. (Etc.)



(Top) A spectacularly exciting screen shot of the economic advisor list thing. Pretty isn't it?
(Above) A couple of Spanish frigates head for the mighty empire.

IN PERSPECTIVE

This is definitely a more refined game than *Civilization*. *SimCity* is the granddaddy though, and it's better than that as well.

Civilisation

Colonization

SimCity

"blacked out"... to shed any light, you need to explore. You'll see.

Anorak Alert...

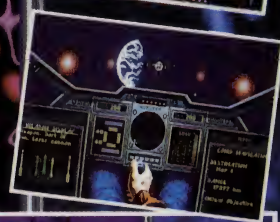
Colonization should appeal to everybody. I mean, I'm more of a *Doom* sort of a person myself, but, nevertheless, *Colonization* had me hooked in just half an hour. But you have to be warned that at its heart lies a giant, shiny anorak. I'll put it like this. Even on the so-called simple setting, a complete game of *Colonization* could easily take an entire lifetime. What's worse is that the longer you play, the more complex it becomes, what with hundreds of units to order about - I actually ran out of memory at one point. (Not my PC... me!) So, if you've got a crappy brain and the attention span of a goldfish, the chances are that you're eventually going to get bogged down too. Dazed, confused and more than a little knackered. I just thought I'd better mention it. Whilst I'm at it I'd also better mention that *Colonization* seeps into your dreams and deprives you of proper sleep - you wake up in the morning in the middle of a calculation: that sort of thing. ☞

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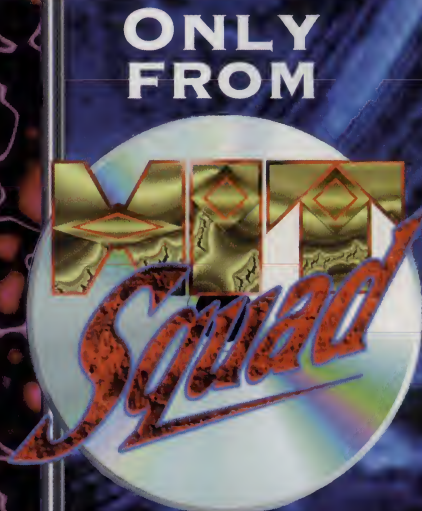


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Desert Strike

And the McCarthy who wath known as Patrick did say unto the multitude, "Verily is it easier to shoot a camel through the eye of a needle than for a man with a beret to enter the kingdom of his neighbour without lots of games being made about the after-effects." And the people were glad.



ESERT STRIKE was just one of the many games to fight for the attention of would-be warm-weather avengers after the long promotional advertisement, that was the Gulf War, hit our screens, and, for all its ethically questionable nature, it was far and away the best to emerge on the consoles. In

fact, in console terms, it's an old, old game, and it has long since been superseded by its follow-up, *Jungle Strike*. It's even quite an old game on the Amiga, on which format-happy psychopaths have been blowing up large pieces of desert for about a year now. Nearly two years after its first appearance, *Desert Strike* has now been hauled feet-first on to the PC, leaving long fingernail marks in its wake. But what exactly is it?

It's isometric, tactical shoot-em-up fun

Yes, it's isometric, because this is the name given to games designed by programmers who haven't got their heads around the concept of perspective. It's tactical, because your Apache AH-64 attack helicopter may very well have an enormous chain gun and a small range of fashionable, colour co-ordinated, air-to-ground missiles, but it doesn't have an endless supply of them. And it's a shoot-em-up, because if anything hoves into view that you don't like the look of, you're perfectly free to shoot it "up".

Each of the four levels of the game is a separate campaign, comprised of several set missions, with 30 missions in the game in total. These range from run-of-the-mill jobs, like taking out enemy radar sites, blowing up enemy airbases and char-grilling lorry-loads of British soldiers; to the more demanding ones, like sealing leaks in oil-pipes with gunfire, or escorting embassy officials to safety. (Although quite why you'd want to do this, when it's probably their fault that you're stuck in this God-forsaken country™ in the first place is beyond me.)

Goodies

To aid your survival while being assaulted on all sides by an assortment of headstrong Arabs with tanks, SCUDs and SAMs, traditional shoot-em-up power-ups are available. These come in the form of caches of fuel drums for topping up the old petrol tanks (fortunately for you, your "Pillager" model Swiss Army knife comes complete with a fuel-drum opener and pop-out siphon attachment); huge crates of missiles with spare sets of touch-papers, and even a gigantic toolbox for repairing your battered chopper.

It also increases your chances of survival if you pick up the lost



allies you'll spot from time to time, fighting for their lives on the burning sands below. (That'll teach them to go to Margate dressed as Mods. Arf arf.) Showing the total lack of intelligence that ensures a long and happy career in the American armed forces, some of these people are "missing" approximately 150 yards (to scale) from the nearest Allied army encampment. In fact, one of them was picked up round the back of a bowling alley after pranging his Stealth Bomber on the bins outside MacDonalds. Anyway, every one of these intellectual giants recovered will give a much-needed boost to the status of your helicopter's armour when returned to a friendly landing zone.

Personality differences

Firing at things is made more "interesting" than it would be in most games by the firing method: since you're the pilot, all you do is point the chopper at the thing you want to wipe off the face of the planet and push the button. Your co-pilot then does his stuff to the best of his abilities, taking out what he thinks you're after. Unfortunately, this can sometimes lead to disappointment - you may think you're clearly aiming in the direction of the 200-foot radar installation, but your co-pilot seems to have the idea that it was the small patch of sand nearby that you saw as a tactical threat. This can introduce an irritating need to position yourself exactly in the right spot by using the "jink" button.

Some of the available co-pilots are better than others: some go to pieces under heavy enemy fire, some have personality disorders that make them shoot everything in sight and others spend their



(Far left) Norm points out the location of the British troops.
(Left) Where are your Hydras when you really need them?
(Below left) A man, er, well, getting into a helicopter.



time being airsick out of the loading bay in time to *The Ride of the Valkyries*. One of the missions involves finding and winching up an ace co-pilot who makes everything just a little more straightforward for you.

Campaign Charlie is me name...

There's no way of saving a game mid-level, and you don't get a password for the next until you've completed a whole campaign, so the tactical nature of the thing is stronger than may at first be apparent. For example, it's best to save missiles where possible and use your chain gun instead. If you keep shooting for long enough, you can even take out buildings with it – but you have to balance that against the amount of fuel you'll expend hovering in place while you do so. And it's usually accepted that, ideally, you should torch all the surrounding men and machines carrying Helicopter-Begone attachments before attempting these leisurely pursuits. Much consultation of the map is the norm.

Generally, but especially from the second level onwards, it's essential that you complete each section of the campaign in the order you're told. Unless you save the right people – or blow up the right things – in the right order, you won't learn the information that allows you to progress to the next mission. For example, until you've captured the SCUD commanders in one level, you don't know the position of the SCUDs you have to destroy. On the other hand, when indulging in the pursuit of more general mayhem, there's nothing to stop you blowing up the primary school before attacking the community theatre group. There's a password system so that you don't have to repeat the early levels each time you play.

The general approach to a campaign involves knocking out the enemy stuff that's going to hurt you, taking care of the necessary targets as quickly as possible, avoiding particularly hazardous areas where possible and balancing the amount of fuel and ammo you're carrying to ensure that you've always got enough to keep you alive and airborne, but also still have a few items stashed about the desert for emergencies.

Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? It's not. The difficulty level was fairly steep in the original game, with a bit of a jump between campaign one and campaign two, in which saved MIAs reward you with fewer armour points, and there are markedly fewer crates of ammo and fuel drums – and running out of fuel in *Desert Strike* is as appealing a prospect as running out of sedatives during *Pets Win Prizes*. This version seems, generally, to be a little harder all round, largely because the enemy's rate of fire – particularly from the



The Battle Map

The best thing about the in-flight map and mission planner is that you don't have to listen to the bollocks spouted at you by the Norman Schwarzkopf lookalike – just take off and find out what you're supposed to be doing at your leisure.

- 1 An exact inventory of the number of ways to be a death-dealing bastard.
- 2 An exact read-out of the damage caused to your helicopter by ramming that school bus into the home for the disabled.
- 3 How close you are from plummeting to your death – in noiseless terror.
- 4 The number of passengers' lives you'll be held responsible for when you crash into the chemical weapons complex.
- 5 The number of times you'll be allowed to crash into the chemical weapons complex and still play the game.
- 6 A display showing the location of the huge range of buildings into which you can collide and the movable objects which'll be trying to blow you out of the sky.
- 7 Also shows the mission in step-by-step detail for Schwarzkopf-avoiders, close-up views of targets complete with *Hello-style* depths of information, and handy facts showing just how badly you're doing at the current mission.



IN PERSPECTIVE

There's no direct comparison for *Desert Strike*, but all of the above combine elements of decision-making among the blasting.

Space Hulk

Cannon Fodder

Desert Strike

Theatre of Death



(Top) Lucky we picked off all the Friendlies, then.
(Above) More careful TV cable-laying by the boys from Videotron.

AAAs - is a lot quicker, drastically reducing the time that you have to fly in and hit something.

So, what you have is a game that's been around a long time on other formats, and which still isn't quite finished even now.

The version we've got doesn't have the complete sound effects which do so much for the atmosphere of the original game. It's taken so long to arrive that just about anybody who's had access to an Amiga, Megadrive or SNES will probably have already had a go of it. And anyone who's done so simply can't fail to notice that this version isn't quite as good as the others.

Overall, it's a little bit harder than other versions we've seen, and it's certainly the weakest version in the graphics department - the chopper sprite itself is a little ragged looking, and small targets seem harder to pick out of the landscape when you are scrolling quickly across screen. On the other hand, *Desert Strike* is still a good blast, with plenty of challenge, and cross-format comparisons mean little as long as it plays well in this version. **Z**

Heed These Words...



(Above) To avoid crashing hideously and becoming the main ingredient in a "Pilot Omelette", make sure you search out the caches of fuel which are scattered around each level.



Is that a SAM in your pocket or are you just pleased to see me?

Occasionally, after razing an Early Learning Centre to the ground in your search for a couple of gallons of Five-Star, you'll get a nasty surprise: from the midst of the ruins lurches an exotically-clad madman brandishing a hand-held missile launcher. This, of course, is symptomatic of Care in the Community at its worst, and he should be dealt with firmly. Shoot him. And don't give him any change for a cup of tea, no matter how charming his accent.

Ammunition and fuel

Running out of fuel in *Desert Strike* is a bad idea. Opportunities to pop down the road to the garage are limited when you're plunging to earth in a helicopter, about to become the central ingredient in a Pilot Omelette. And running out of Hydras and Hellfires in the middle of a disagreement with an anti-aircraft missile launcher is equally ill-advised, especially if you're not too hot at emergency reversing.

To avoid either of these tactical faux-pas, it's advisable to find and appropriate the caches of fuel and ammo scattered around each level. Their rough location is given on your mission map, along with the location of all the things that are out to get you. Once in a while, your parcels of happiness can be seen just lying around in the desert, but usually you'll have to indulge in a bit of ad-hoc landscape gardening or fire-bomb a creche before the goodies are revealed.

MIAs

Dotted about the highways and by-ways of your local desert are the comrades in arms who have gone missing in action, usually because they've been shot down by marauding moustachioed scum, misjudged a strafing run and crashed into a camel, or run off with a belly dancer and been fleeced in a dark wadi by her pals.

Invariably they'll be engaged in interminable shoot-outs with enemy soldiers, and will be extremely grateful if you happen, on passing, to pick off their persecutors with a burst of chain gun fire. This is rewarding enough if only to watch their happy waves when the baddies cop it. But don't just wave back and fly off with a cheery smile; stop and pick them up. Any MIAs that you take safely back to a landing site will replenish vital armour points to your damaged helicopter.

Of course, like any red-blooded American male, you may occasionally get carried away and shoot your own men just because you like the neat juddering feeling when you hold down the trigger (and who doesn't?). But don't worry: as long as they're only enlisted men there shouldn't be any problem.



SCORE

Graphics may be a little dull, but it's still a good blast and that's what counts.

(Below) A man with a SAM.



Minimum Memory: 2Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 4.5 Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: SoundBlaster & 100 per cent compatibles

Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Price: £34.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Gremlin Tel: 0742 753423



(Top) Chuck's attempt to ram the security tower goes slightly awry. (Above) Why not brighten up your jet with a huge bunch of flowers? ('Cos it's pansy, I n't it?)

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Alien Legacy

Obviously yawning at the prospect of churning out cutey adventure game number two million and one, Sierra have decided to release a game with lots of alien things in it. We asked in-house alien **Chris Anderson** to check it out.



saving the last remaining people of the earth from extinction. The first thing that will strike you about *Alien Legacy*, though, is that it's very heavy on the plot-setting. This trend is continued throughout the game and while it goes on and on about the storyline so much that it's often in danger of disappearing up its own rear anatomy, the gist of it is actually quite simple. This then, is what it's all about...

The Big Sleep

You have just woken up from years of cryogenic sleep to resume command of your ship, the United Nations spacecraft, The Calypso. On board this ship, in cryogenic suspension, are thousands of human refugees; survivors of an intergalactic war (Yawn. Now that's really original isn't it?) that tore the Earth apart.

Years after your ship was sent into space, another one, the Tantalus, was launched. The Tantalus is more advanced than your ship, so it should get to the pre-designated waypoint years before you. When you arrive, you can find no trace of the Tantalus or its crew. Your objective then, is to find out what happened to your ill-fated colleagues, and build colonies on planets to ensure mankind's continued existence.

However, to add to your problems, your ship's robot keeps receiving very spooky messages from Earth stating quite clearly that things are going very horribly wrong. The final message is full of stuff like "they are overwhelming us, help!" and "aargh!", which sums it up, really.

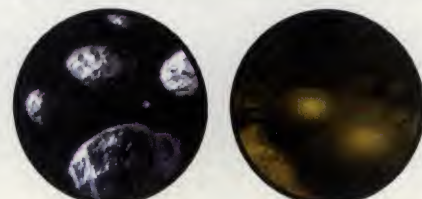
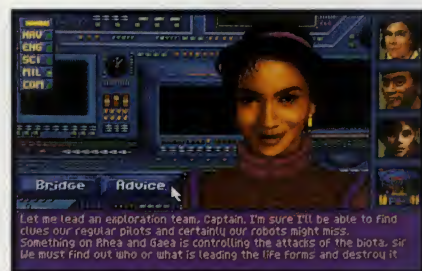
EITHER SIERRA have suddenly decided they've been doing it wrong all along by producing twee adventure games, or they've just got into all things galactic extremely big time. Hot on the heels of *Outpost* – Sierra's classy strategy game that has you building colonies in space – comes *Alien Legacy*, which has you doing, er, more of the same. Although graphically, there is no comparison between the two (the visuals in *Outpost* are absolutely stunning), the colony-building element is very strong in both games. Also, they are both all about



(Left) Here's some absolutely stunning external shots of your ship in combat. Oh all right, I got them from the intro.



(Top right) Meet your advisers. They talk a lot, but they can't always be trusted. (Above right) Your ship's bridge. From here you can, er, look out the window and see lots of stars.



Sounds familiar?

Alien Legacy is, first and foremost, a strategy game. Most of your time is spent building colonies and maintaining the resources on them. The building aspect is similar in style to *Sim City*, but it's not as complex. It's more like the simplistic resource management seen in *Dune 2*. However, that's not to say it's easy – the more colonies you build, the harder it gets to keep track of what's going on in them all. Fortunately, the mouse-controlled interface is excellent and you can go to any part of the game quickly and without hassle. Also, you're not entirely on your own when it comes to making decisions. You have five advisors at your disposal who will point you in the right direction at crucial points.

Looking for clues

Apart from the resource management side of the game, your main objective is to find out what happened to the Tantalus. As you explore the different planets with your fleet of ships, you constantly pick up clues which help you piece together the information you need to find the Tantalus and its



(Below) Transport ships keep your colonies stacked up with supplies. Hoorah! (Bottom two) View planets from overhead to find points of interest.

Colonial Management

To put a very involved process as simply as I can, this is how you go about building and maintaining colonies in *Alien Legacy*.

There are six basic resources you need to start a colony. You need ore for building materials, energy to supply power to your buildings, life support for food and water etc., science resources to help you develop new technologies, humans for personnel, and robots for constructing installations and piloting your ships. Once you've got a few buildings up and running, your colony starts producing these essentials itself and gives you room to concentrate on the other aspects of the game. If you run low on materials, you can get them yourself by going to the surface exploration screen and hunting around the planets until you find them.

As the game progresses, your scientists will invent new items which make your installations and ships more efficient. Your factories become more advanced, your power plants produce energy quicker, your ships go faster and get better weapons and so on. It all sounds more complicated than it is. After a while, designing profitable colonies becomes second nature. It's keeping them going that's the problem.

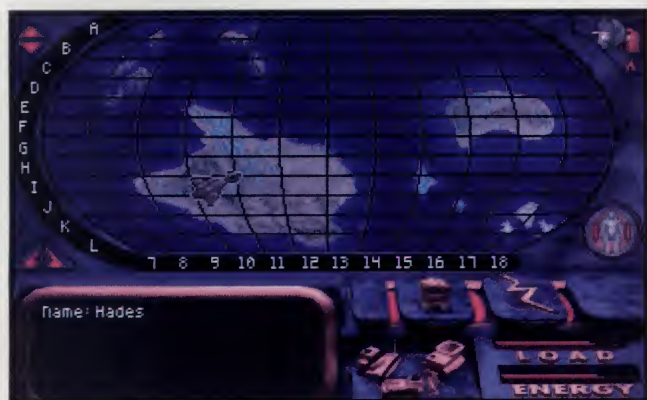


survivors. There's also a combat element to the game, but you have to go way into the game before you find it, and when you do, it's a bit of a disappointment. The graphics for the combat section are the same as those used for the surface exploration part, except there's a few aliens stuck on top of it for you to shoot or drop bombs on – whatever takes your fancy.

On the whole, I found *Alien Legacy* to be highly addictive. In the later stages of the game, it's a real challenge to keep your colonies ticking over and maintain a steady balance of resources in each one. The whole thing seems a bit daunting when you first start, but if you stick with it for an hour or two, you'll find an engrossing and addictive strategy game with a decent plot to boot. ☑



This is a totally brilliant screen shot that I got from Sam at Sierra. I don't know what it is, though.



SCORE

A bit daunting at first, but proves to be both challenging and very addictive.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Dune II and *Outpost* both have futuristic overtones and lots of building bits. *Outpost* looks better than *Alien Legacy*, but isn't as instantly addictive. *Dune II* is more addictive still.

Dune II

Alien Legacy

Outpost

Minimum Memory: 4Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386 16MHz

Hard Disk Space Required: 24Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA


Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, SoundBlaster, Pro audio, Spectrum, Gravis Ultrasound

Controls: Mouse

Comments: DOS 5.0 or above required; Hayes-compatible modems supported; 132-column printers supported

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Sierra Tel: 0734 303322



Pinball Dreams Deluxe

Patrick McCarthy isn't deaf, dumb and blind – he's just dumb. Dumb enough to sit there while we got the red hot poker out to see about fulfilling the other criteria.



ON THE BACK of this box there are four proud boasts. Before we look at the game itself, let's go through those boasts, shall we? [Chorus (with gusto): Yes, let's do just that very thing.]

"An hour of sound effects and music."

What the hell does that mean? You can leave one two-second loop running for an hour and say the same thing. Perhaps they mean it took them an hour to write the tracks contained on the CD. Having listened to them, this seems unlikely to me.

"Stunning ray-traced animations."

Unfortunately, they aren't actually part of the game. It's a moody zoom-in of a table standing in the kind of low-level lighting that is popular with ninja assassins or contestants on *Come Dancing*.

"Interactive guide to the history of pinball."

Hold me back. I must have this CD for my very own.

"Unrivaled pinball realism."

Blimey. That's actually something to do with the game... It's unfortunate, isn't it, that games companies feel that they have to stick all kinds of extra rubbish into a package just because it's on CD. You end up with a game that's exactly the same as its disk-based counterpart, but with loads of cack chucked in.

It's the same

Basically, despite the tagged-on "Deluxe", this is exactly the same game as the disk-based version. In fact, by way of proving this, there is a *Pinball Dreams Enhanced* version on its way – don't get excited, I don't think you'll be getting a pop-out cardboard and polyurethane pinball table surround for your PC, or anything. The graphics are identical to the disk version, which was identical to the Amiga version, come to that. The sound is also identical (but at least there aren't any annoying shouts of "CD-quality sound" on the box).

Except...

The only extra in the gameplay stakes is that you get eight tables, whereas your lowlife friends without CD drives who want all eight have to pay twice for them. This is nice, in a value-for-money kind of way, but it does tend to bring home to you just how repetitive the table designs get – some ramps, a few buttons and lights and off you go. With four tables you don't notice it as much, somehow; with eight, it's more apparent how they're churning them out.

That's not to say that this is a bad game – 21st Century Entertainment have had enough practice at making them, after all – they're good, solid examples of 50s-style retro designs. Gameplay is firmly in the traditional areas of hitting the ramps, lighting up buttons in the right order and racking up points with single-ball play. There's a basic three balls per play and bonus balls, but no multi-ball play. The tables scroll as well as the disk versions, and it can be played with the minimum of installation to the hard disk. Not bad – but not as good as 21st Century's own *Pinball Fantasies*, or the shareware *Epic Pinball*. But they're not out on CD at the mo. ☒



21st Century Entertainment have produced good examples of 50s-style pinball machines, with the obligatory ramps and flashing lights.



SCORE

Eight tables in one game, but little else to account for a CD release.

Minimum Memory: 570K

Minimum Processor: 286
(386 33 recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 500K

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA, SVGA

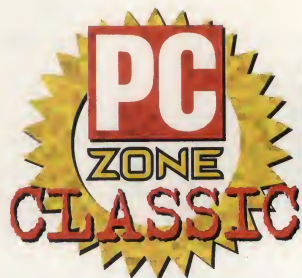
Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: 21st Century Entertainment

Tel: 0235 851533



NHL Hockey 95

Patrick McCarthy's the only person in the office who knows a blue line has nothing to do with Jack Warner and a face-off has nothing to do with cosmetic surgery. And he's wasted his only ice hockey jokes on an introduction.

EVERY YEAR on the consoles, EA's sports games – *John Madden Football* and *NHL Hockey* – are re-released in the run-up to Christmas with new season stats and a minor tweak to the gameplay, just to give them that extra "must have" quality. You think about it for a while – reluctant to be taken in by marketing deviousness – then you buy them anyway. You have no choice – they're far and away the best sims of their respective sports that you'll play. Now it's happening on the PC: *NHL Hockey 95* is this year's upgrade for last year's classic game.

Sanity, madness and the team

Let's get the new additions out of the way first. There's a fake shot to try to make the computer-controlled goalie fall over in amazement; there are drop passes – a fancy term for leaving the puck behind you for a following team-mate to pick up (something you could do before by the simple method of passing backwards); and there's the more useful option to make your defenders "hit the ice", or throw themselves lengthwise to try to cover as much area as possible in order to block a shot. This isn't as insane as it sounds, given the amount of padding these people wear – it's just a question of finding the puck afterwards. (Cries from the crowd: "It's in his mouth! He's hiding it where his teeth used to be!")

There's also some new goalkeeper animations, which nobody

cares about as long as they save the shots.

Then there's the "create player" option.

At last, the chance to play the person of your dreams at centre ice and Alf Roberts – the Jabba the Hutt of Weatherfield – in goal (and over most of the pitch, come to think of it).



(Bottom main pic) I always thought hockey was a real girls' game until I bumped into this bunch of testosterone-packed geezers.

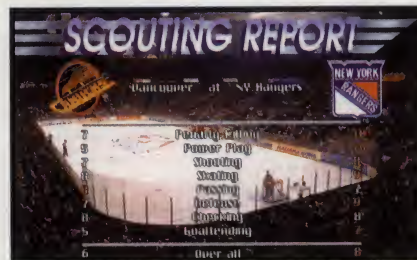
IN PERSPECTIVE

Well there really isn't anything in it between *NHL Hockey 95* and its predecessor of 94, but at least they're both better than *Wayne Gretzky*.

NHL Hockey 95

NHL Hockey 94

Wayne Gretzky Hockey



This is the kind of option all sports games should have by law. It means that if you're really so bothered about having updated teams every year you'll probably sit down and do it yourself given the chance. (Then buy the new version anyway because it has some new goalkeeper animation.) For everyone else, who doesn't give a toss, it's a chance to have a laugh.

To recap...

The rest is as it was last year – exhibition games or seasonal campaigns, full control of league schedules via the League Manager facility, trading, great sound effects and animation, and outstanding gameplay. There are two great sports game on the PC. One is *Front Page Sports Football*, which is

diminished slightly as a computer game by the effort the uninitiated must expend to really get going. The other is this – the controls are as intuitive as controls get, so you'll be playing in seconds, but there's enough depth to ensure that you'll improve with practice. You don't need to know anything about ice hockey; you just have to like a good sports game. (A good joystick splitter would help, too). If you have it already, buying this version is up to you. If you don't have it, it's well worth it. (Or you could buy a Megadrive and an old copy of *EA Hockey* – and at about £8, a complete barg.)

SCORE

91

Confused? It's all in PC ZONE, issue 7. That'll teach you not to be a regular reader.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386/33MHz
(486/33MHz recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 15Mb

Graphics Cards Supported: SVGA, 512K video RAM

Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Comments: All major sound cards

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Electronic Arts **Tel:** 0753 549442

TROUBLE SHOOT

FEATURING
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In the chewed up, masticated slightly and spat out world of gamesplaying, there are two sides. Two frontiers of gamesplaying approach. On the left are the HackMasters: sworn-in disciples to the cause of cheating. Hacks and cracks are their thing. On the right are the Trueplayers™: paid-up members of the righteous play-with-skill-and-fail club. They would never cheat. Oh no. *Troubleshooter* mediates over this oh so repetitive conflict with a packet of extra-length ciggies at close hand.



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The HackMasters™



AND HERE comes Christmas. Sort of. Admittedly, it's a few months off yet, but Christmas sends a special thrill right to the heart of the HackMasters™ cycling shorts. It's not old Fat Boy Santa which thrills us so. Nor is it pressies, sweet cakes, grandma, or baubles dangling merrily from the tree. No. It is the rush, the flow, the tsunami (if you like) of new, eminently hackable releases which funnel their way into the market in time for the Yuletide spending spree. We wait, somewhat impatiently, for the hexadecimal delights of *Doom II*, *System Shock*, *Magic Carpet* and *Dark Forces*. Yummy yummy yummy (in our tum).

BACK UP

Most, if not all, of the hacks on this page will require changing actual game files (mainly SAVEGAME files, peppered with the odd main .EXE file). It is then sensible to back up the file specified in the hack. To do this, simply enter the directory containing the file, say for example SAVEGAME.SAV, and back it up thus:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.SAV SAVEGAME.BAK
```

If you make a bad mistake and start crying and all, then restore files by typing:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.BAK SAVEGAME.SAV
```

HEXADECIMAL

Your PC counts strangely. In hexadecimal (base 16). We count in decimal (base 10). For the HackMaster's experience you only really need to learn a few choice hex numbers (see table below).

WHAT YOU NEED

There are three things every HackMaster™ groupie must have (well, at least one of them).

1. **DEBUG** Free with DOS is a program called *debug*. A very useful program it is too, since it allows you to edit files of all descriptions and subtly change the data therein. It is the program we use most in the Hackmaster Zone™, and since it is the most user-unfriendly program on this planet, a brief introduction/explanation is necessary. Here's a step-by-step guide to a *Debug* hack:

To run it just type *DEBUG* in the appropriate directory (i.e. the one mentioned in the hack blurb). It

should run automatically and produce a little '>' prompt. If you get a "file not found" style error then your DOS path hasn't been set properly. Refer to the MSDOS manual and remember the bottom line – don't ring us (no matter how desperate) unless it's TruePlayer™ Tips day.

```
1 >MCHEAT.TPR <return>
```

Now, once you have a little '>' prompt you should type in the commands listed in the program, starting with the line above the "N" command. This tells *debug* which program is to be hacked. There should be no space between the "N" and the full filename.

```
2 >L <return>
```

This command loads the file you've just specified into memory and into the hands of the hacker.

```
3 >E 0103 v <return>
```

This is the Edit function. Simply type is as it appears above, i.e. with a space between the "E" and the address (0103) and the "v". The "v" stands for a value you will enter yourself, ranging between 00 and FF (0 to 255 decimal).

```
4 >E0308 01 01 01 01
```

If the edit command looks something like this (i.e. a long list of numbers), then press RETURN after the address (the first four-digit code) and *debug* will repeat your command (see below). Then simply type in the values which follow (01, 01 etc.) pressing SPACE between each one, except the last when you should press RETURN. So basically, the command should be enacted thus (with what you must type shown in green):

```
>E 0308 <Return>
```

```
21FB:A97F 01.01 <space> 00.01 <space> 00.01  
<space> 00.01 <return>
```

```
>
```

```
5 >W <return>
```

This command writes the hacked file back onto the disk. A message saying "writing xxxxx bytes" will appear, where xxxxx is the size of the file (it varies). Nothing will have been changed on your hard disk until you type this command. Therefore, if you've made a mistake earlier just quit *debug* and start the process again.

```
6 >Q <return>
```

This quits you back to DOS.

A DISK SECTOR EDITOR

Another useful bit of kit is a Disk Sector Editor, such as *XTree Gold* or *PC Tools*. If you own one, then you'll know how to use it – but it is important to note that the offset (or address) in a *debug* hack is for *debug* which automatically adds 256 bytes (or 100 hex) to the address. So, if you prefer to use your editor, and a separate disk editor hack isn't included, then you just deduct 100 hex from the address. So, if an address is 0141 on the page, then your address will be 0041. It's a simple case of deducting one from the second figure on the left. If in doubt, use *debug*.

ER

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 93/94

(Domark)

A rather long-winded letter this way comes from Croydon. A letter penned by the irrepressible Steve Wiggins. Stevie – as we, the HackMasters have monickered him – has earned himself a rather special HackMaster accolade. Stevie will go down in short-term history as the guy who finally hacked a football management game (*Championship Manager 93/94*) and thereby stopped the 10¹⁶ calls we get every Wednesday for said genre of game. A quick word from Stevie:

“This hack will allow the player to manage more than four clubs. When he reaches the max number of managers allowed, he can edit the SAVEGAME file and then the number of managers to one, and then add another three managers. He can repeat the process as many times as he wants, thus allowing him to buy players from other clubs, sell his own crap players at incredibly high prices and take as much money as he wants from other clubs, making his club millions of pounds!!!”

Well, three exclamations marks indeed. To get this hack to work, you'll need a sector editor (such as *XtreeGold* or *PC Tools*) and just a moderate amount of your wits about you.

1) Load the game as per normal and choose “New Game”. Enter a manager to start with, say Tottenham, and enter your name. Use manager one as your primary club (it makes things easier).

2) Add another manager and choose a club. You might like to buy their players or

sell your own players to them at very high prices (i.e. choose Blackburn and sell a player to them for \$9,999,999).

3) Repeat the above step two more times to create managers three and four.

4) Now resign all three managers (two, three and four), but don't resign numero one, the primary manager.

5) Save your game in slot one. Quit out and back up the file SVGAMEG1 (no extension).

6) Using *XtreeGold*, examine the file SVGAMEG1. Do the following:

```
FIND:      04
AT:        43434
CHANGE TO: 01
```

7) Save the changes and re-load the game. You'll be back to managing your current primary club and have three spare managers available.

8) Gosh.

And here's an additional tip from Stevie: “The best way of fixing a win is to click on reserves team for opposition team and field as many reserve players as possible, and on the tactics screen put the goal keeper in a forward position. Watch the goals fly in the back of the net!!!!”

FIFA SOCCER (Electronic Arts)



(Above) Don't use the FIFA cheat when playing your large (6"5") play "chum".

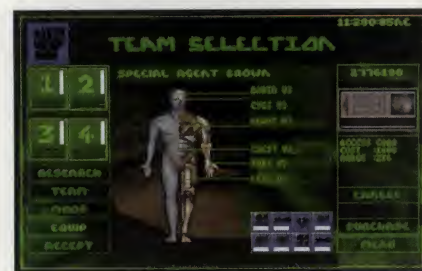
While we're on the footy theme, why don't you just try this little programming loop-hole (try: “bug”) in *Fifa Soccer*, as pointed out by Craig Tyson. To score everytime (well, nearly) follow Craig's instructions:

“When the keeper is ready to punt the ball downfield, stand close to him – bang in front of him is best. When the keeper kicks the ball, either press “fire” to slide tackle and get the ball as he drops it for the kick, or stand about .5cm away and press “fire” as he kicks it. Your man should jump and

head the ball into the net, over the keeper.”

Craig also recommends that you “don't do this in two-player games – if you want to stay friends, that is.”

SYNDICATE AMERICAN REVOLT (Bullfrog/Electronic Arts)



Yeah, admittedly, this one's been out for a while now, but who knows, you may just have got it networked. We, the HackMasters, have done just that and we willingly concede that it is a spiff multi-player experience. Anyway, S. C. Chia, gasping as he is for a free game, has presented us with a quick lots-of-cash hack for this amoral death'em up.

Play your game as normal and save the game in slot one. Quit out and enter the SYND\SAVE2 directory. Back up the file 00.GAM and type DEBUG:

```
>NOO.GAM
>L
>E 0118 FF FF 02 7F
>W
>Q
```

TIE FIGHTER (LucasArts/US Gold)



A massive array of *Tie Fighter* hacks await your glimmering perusal this month, hack disciples. It seems, we muse, more apt somehow to cheat in *Tie Fighter*. *X-Wing* was so squeaky clean and righteous that you actually felt bad giving yourself infinite shields and weapons (well, sometimes). You know, with *The Force* and all that. Now,

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you get into trouble ring us on TruePlayer™ Tips day (Wednesday 2pm to 6pm) for free tips support.

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however, since you're in a black leather, Imperial cockpit, cheating seems that much more applicable. That's how we justify it anyway. Try these methods for Imperial supremacy:

1) This clever little copy hack is from Daryl Hathaway and David Grieve. To play any mission, at any time, in the combat simulator, do the following:

- Enter the TIE\MISSION directory
- Back up simulator mission 1 by typing:

```
REN HFLW.TIE BACKUP.TIE
```

c) Copy XXXXX.TIE HF1W.TIE, where XXXXX is the battle mission you want to try (i.e. B1M1TM.TIE is Battle 1, Mission 1, Tiefighter Mission).

d) Run *Tie Fighter* as normal and enter the combat simulator. Select mission one and away you go.

e) To restore the original files, firstly delete the current mission one with:

```
DEL HFLW.TIE
```

and then restore the original file by typing:

```
REN SAVE.TIE HFLW.TIE
```

2) A rather more advanced form of hacking now from Martin Rowe. You'll need a rather more advanced form of editor than *debug* for this, too (i.e. the eponymous *Xtree Gold* or *PC Tools*). Follow these steps:

a) Back up the file FLIGHT.OVL in the main TIE directory and then load up the file in your sector editor.

b) Enact the following changes to enable shields on our Imperial spaceships.

SHIP	FIND	AT	CHANGE TO
Tie Fighter	00	36231	01
Tie Interceptor	00	3631D	01
Tie Bomber	00	36409	01

c) If you find these shields are not powerful enough for your nefarious aims, try increasing their strength:

SHIP	GO TO	CHANGE TO
Tie Fighter	36232	98 3A
Tie Interceptor	3631E	98 3A
Tie Bomber	3640A	98 3A
Tie Advanced	364F6	98 3A
Assault Gunboat	36C56	98 3A



(Left) See more of these with our Tie Fighter cheat.

d) Maybe a few more missiles would be handy (at this stage Martin Rowe is demoted a rank in the HackMaster hierarchy by becoming vague and only giving the addresses for two ships):

SHIP	FIND	AT	CHANGE TO
Tie Fighter	02	36267	09
	02	36280	09
	02	36288	09
Tie Advanced	04	3652B	09
	04	36544	09
	04	3654C	09

3) Another little hack was enclosed as a postscript in Martin's letter. Careful implementation of this hack will allow you to fly the new, advanced Tie Defender ship (a rather secret invention of the Empire's). The method is simple. Enter the MISSIONS subdirectory and back up that ever-present HF1W.TIE file. Use *debug* and:

```
-NHFLW.TIE
-L
-E 01FC 09
-W
-Q
```

Now, when you play Historic Mission 1 for the *Tie Fighter*, you should be at the helm of the rather supah-doopah Tie Defender. Cool (as an American would say at this point).

4) If none of these hacks suit your fancy, then why not experiment with the pilot file, as dictated by Alan Crowe of Aberdeen. The first step is to back up your current pilot. Let's call him CHEAT. Just type:

```
COPY CHEAT.TFR CHEAT.BAK
```

then debug:

```
-NCHEAT.TFR
-L
-E 0102 v v=rank
00 Flight Cadet
01 Flight Officer
02 Lieutenant
03 Captain
```

TEAM MEMBER	Strength	Marksman	Health	Intelligence	AP
R.Teather	012C,04	012E,63	0130,05	0136,63	0138,63
N.Adamson	0201,64	0203,63	0205,64	020B,63	020D,64
K.L.Dobson	0458,BF	045A,63	045C,B8	0462,63	0464,BA
T.Hudson	05DA,63	05DC,18	05DE,63	05E4,1A	05E6,63
P.J.Roderik	0796,63	0798,6F	079A,63	07A0,69	07A2,63
T.L.Ramo	092D,66	092F,63	0931,66	0937,63	0939,66
L.Jelico	0AD6,63	0AD8,5F	0ADA,63	0AE0,59	0AE2,63
P. Hackney	0C77,63	0C79,67	0C7B,63	0C81,67	0C83,63

```
04 Commander
05 Major
06 Colonel
07 General
-E 0103 v v=difficulty level
00 Easy
01 Medium
02 Hard
-E 0108 FF FF Max skill
```

```
-E 010A v v=no.of circle of
secret order
-E 015A v Tie Fighter sim
levels complete
-E 015B v Tie Bomber sim
levels complete
-E 015C v Tie Interceptor
-E 015D v Tie Advanced
-E 015E v Assault Gunboat
-E 015F v Tie Defender
-E 0308 01 01 01 01
Tie Fighter
training complete
-E 0310 01 01 01 01
Tie Bomber
-E 0318 01 01 01 01
Tie Interceptor
-E 0320 01 01 01 01
Tie Advanced
-E 0328 01 01 01 01
Assault Gunboat
-E 0330 01 01 01 01
Tie Defender
-E 037D v v=battle 1 missions
complete (0-6)
-E 037E v v=battle 2 missions
complete (0-5)
-E 037F v v=battle 3 missions
complete (0-6)
-E 0380 v v=battle 4 missions
complete (0-5)
-E 0381 v v=battle 5 missions
complete (0-5)
-E 0382 v v=battle 6 missions
complete (0-4)
-E 0383 v v=battle 7 missions
complete (0-5)
-W
-Q
```

SABRE TEAM (Krisalis)

If you are finding this little strategic "bon mot" a little too tough to handle. That's just cool. You're a prime candidate for this sensational hack thing, sent in by an arch-Hackmaster. (Who neglected to include his name and address. Please send in both of these in your distinctive multi-coloured pens for your prizes.) Mull over this table for a second:

It's fairly self-explanatory as you can see. Once implemented, this hack will give all your soldiers superhuman attributes, 99 per cent strength, health, action points etc. To actually do the implementing, save your game in slot one, quit out to dos, and back up the file SAVEPEOP.SV1. Now, say you want to plump up all the stats of our friend and

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yours, Mr. R. Teather, you would type this in *debug*:

```
-NSAVEPEOP.SV1
-L
-E 0120 04
-E 012E 63
-E 0130 05
-E 0136 63
-E 0138 63
-W
-Q
```

So, basically, each address must be filled with the value following it. Simple? Any problem, you know who to ring.

ALIEN LEGACY

(Dynamix)



(Above) It's Leslie Neilson and Ken (friend of Barbie).

Just a swift quickie for this game, again from the anonymous hacker. Save your game in slot, quit out, and back up the file SAVEGAME.SAV in the SAVE directory. Then, follow this little *debug* recipe:

```
-NSAVEGAME.SAV
-L
-E 2498 FF FF 00 00 }
-E 249C FF FF 00 00 }
-E 24A0 FF FF 00 00 } Calypso
-E 24A4 FF FF 00 00 }
-E 275A FF FF 00 00 }
-E AD94 7F 98 98 Max Energy
-E AEB6 7F 96 98 for
-E AFD8 7F 96 98 all
-E B0FA 7F 96 98 ships
-E 275C FF FF 00 00 }
-E 2760 FF FF 00 00 }
-E 2764 FF FF 00 00 } New Terra
-E 2768 FF FF 00 00 }
-E 276C FF FF 00 00 }
-W
-Q
```

CYBERACE

(Cyberdreams)

Another quick thing for those of you who

missed our *CyberRace* trainer a few months back. One more time, the anonymous hacker is responsible. Simply save your game in slot 0, enter the subdirectory MFILS, and debug as follows:

```
-NGAME00.SAV
-L
-E 01BC FF FF Max money
-E 017A 41
-E 0179 v v=race (31-39)
-W
-Q
```

If you want to play, say race five, just enter 35 at the 0179 address.

(Below) At last the built in cheat to Theme Park has been discovered.



THEME PARK

(Bullfrog/Electronic Arts)

The cheats for *Theme Park* just keep pouring in. We had mega-money cheats, low interest cheats and er, some other cheats, and now we have a real, live, built-in cheat, discovered by Simon Lashley, to further your chances in the *Theme Park* capitalist environs. Here's the method:

- 1) Start a new park under a new nickname.
- 2) On the next screen, choose the SIM level and fill in all the other details.
- 3) Choose UK on the World Map screen.
- 4) When the park screen appears, choose Slow Mode.
- 5) Choose Bouncy Castle from the ride icon and place it in the park. Put the entrance and exit where you like.

(Below) At last, the cheat for *Ultima Underworld II* has been completed.



6) Now study the location where the words Bouncy Castle appear above the entrance of the ride. Keep pressing the "p" key until the writing speeds up and the game is paused.

7) Now press the following keys in order: Pause, L, pause, I, pause, V, pause, E, pause, C, pause, A, pause S, pause H, pause, P, P.

8) Change the speed to "ultra" and you should get a new ride and shop every year.

If that one is just not hack enough for you, try arch-Hackmaster Johnathon Mell's guide to permanent mega-cash. Just back up the file MAIN.EXE as MAIN.BAK in the main *Theme Park* directory and, using a sector editor, enter:

```
FF FF FF 7F FF FF FF 7F FF FF FF 7F
```

at address B8BA4. This will give you unbelievable amounts of starting cash at all three skill levels. If, for some reason, you want to revert back to the original *Theme Park*, just type:

```
COPY MAIN.BAK MAIN.EXE
```

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD II

(Origin/Electronic Arts)

Our esteemed Italian HackMaster, Aldo Corbellini – a weird banana if there ever was one – has written to point out that our long-awaited hack for *UW II* in last year's HackMasters Conference was flawed. Although it gave the player infinite vitality no problem, it also had the usual side-effect of giving all the other monsters in the game infinite vitality too. Aah. So, at last a correction.

If you think you're big and tough enough to dare the complex innards of this hack, then first back up the file UW2.EXE as UW2.BAK. With a nearby sector editor do the following for infinite vitality:

```
FIND: 26 80 7F 08 00 75 05
CHANGE TO: EB 0A 90 90 90 75 05
```

```
FIND: 26 80 7F 08 00 77 05
CHANGE TO: EB 0A 90 90 90 77 05
```

And for infinite mana, try:

```
FIND: 8A 57 37 B6 00 3B C2 7E 05
CHANGE TO: 8A 57 37 B6 00 3B C2 EB 05
```

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NOW EVERYBODY HAS got their favourite, be it that neat little number from Konix or the thing that looks as though it's been ripped out of the cockpit of an F-16. What people plug into their PCs, however, is usually governed by the type of games they like to play.

Now that's all very well, but unless you have an uncle who works for Group 4 and likes nothing more than to bring his work home with him, or, alternatively, a big sister who has just married some chap called Rothschild who just adores to buy her family presents, you're going to have to come to some sort of compromise as to what joystick(s) you buy.

Of course, for most of us money is a key factor, but when you consider how many hours you're probably going to spend wiggling and jigging, it starts to make sense to go for the best (and therefore, probably the most expensive stick you can afford). Most people have at least (or intend to buy) two joysticks: an "all rounder type" to give to their mate when he or she comes round for a game or twenty of *Sensi* and the all-singing, all-dancing number that they will always use when the gaming starts to get serious.

Some of the more extravagant might also have felt the inclination to invest in a gamepad (especially if they're an ex-console user) for use with arcade and footie sims, whilst flight sim fans looking for a more realistic control system might have a Thrustmaster Flight Control System or a steering yoke stuck to their desk.

Driving fans can now also get in on the action courtesy of the Thrustmaster T1 driving wheel and pedals for the ultimate in "in-car" action.

In other words, if you've got the money, there's an input device out there that will enhance your most favourite game and, hopefully, the way you play it too.

That's all very well, but we understand that most game players out there are on a budget, and this is why this PC Zone Joystick Guide is different. What we're looking for is the best all-rounder – the stick that's as slick with *Sensi* as it is sensitive with *IndyCar*. The stick that you're proud to pass to your friend when he or she comes round for a bit of two-player action, without feeling too guilty. We know it's a tall order, but we also understand that when it comes to your second joystick, you have to come to some sort of compromise with regards to price, performance, comfort and what we're going to call from now on "all-roundability".

But we also understand that you're a bunch of game-crazy fanatics who want to get nothing but the very best out of your PC when it comes to playing

games, and this is why we've also included a few specialist sticks for you to oggle at. Yep, we know that they might be a bit on the pricey side, but when you've spent anything upwards of a grand on a new machine you don't want your performance to falter due to lack of buttons and lateral movement now do you? It's only money after all! ☑



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What's Up?

Joystick not working? Then check the following:

- 1. Is it plugged in properly. If it's got screws to tighten the connection then use them.
- 2. Have you got it in the right port? If you've got a dual port card or a splitter then it will use the "A" port.

- 3. Have you calibrated the joystick properly? Some sticks come with their own calibration

software, so it's best to use that. If it hasn't then use the routine found in the software. Check that the trimming on your stick is correctly adjusted to avoid "drifting".

- 4. Make sure that you have disabled all the other game ports on your PC otherwise you'll have no end of problems. You'll have to delve deep into your sound card's instruction manual to do this.

- 5. If you're at an absolute loss, contact the manufacturers and ask for help.

So How Did We Do It?

Each joystick was given the basic once over to assess quality of build, features, durability, looks etc., and then we all had a damn good sesh and used it to play a cross-section of games that we thought most of you would have at least played at some time or other – namely *Sensible Soccer*, *TFX*, *Zool 2*, *TIE Fighter* and *Indycar*. Each stick was then assessed as to how it performed with each individual game and then given an overall score out of ten, taking into consideration price, overall performance, comfort and, of course, the all important "all-roundability" factor.



The best all-rounders

We've got 24 (count 'em!) what we consider to be "all-round" joysticks in this section of all shapes and sizes, with prices starting from just £10 right up to £50. So here's the lowdown...

Hawk Plus

MANUFACTURER:

Technoplus

RRP: £12.99

NUMBER OF FIRE

BUTTONS: 2

AUTOFIRE: Yes

LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft

DIGITAL/ANALOGUE:

Analogue

SUCKERS: Yes



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A well-made and nicely balanced stick that is both comfortable to use and quite responsive. The large degree of movement makes it more suitable for flight sims and driving games rather than footie or platform games. Good value for money nevertheless.

SCORE: 6

Gamester PC Joystick

MANUFACTURER: LMP

RRP: £14.99

NUMBER OF

FIREBUTTONS: 2

AUTOFIRE: Yes

LENGTH OF CABLE:

6ft

DIGITAL/ANALOGUE:

Analogue

SUCKERS: Yes



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A smart looking stick with a good contoured grip and fairly responsive firebuttons. The degree of movement makes it suitable for most type of game, though it didn't really excel at any of the games we tested it with. A bit of a compromise stick, but more than adequate for general use.

SCORE: 6

PC Xtra

MANUFACTURER:

Power Play

RRP: £19.99

NUMBER OF FIRE

BUTTONS: 2

AUTOFIRE: Yes

LENGTH OF CABLE: 5ft

DIGITAL/ANALOGUE:

Digital

SUCKERS: No



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A classic design and a classic stick. Most people have used a joystick like this at some time and most have been impressed with it. It's strong, nicely finished with two good-sized fire buttons and a sensitive, yet responsive shaft. It's great for footie sims such as *Sensi*, platformers and shoot 'em ups, but you can forget it when it comes to flight sims. A must for arcade fans.

SCORE: 7

Speed King

MANUFACTURER: Power Play

RRP: £19.99

NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2

AUTOFIRE: Yes

LENGTH OF CABLE: 5ft

DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital and

Analogue versions available

SUCKERS: No



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

Another classic design that you either love or hate. This ergonomically designed stick fits snugly in the hand and is very responsive, with two good fire buttons and a strong shaft. The digital version is quite brilliant with arcade and footie games, but rather useless with flight sims etc. The analogue version is okay, but if you're going to buy another stick specifically for flight sims then look elsewhere. Some people find that they grip it so tightly it makes their hand ache. What a bunch of lightweights!

SCORE: 7

PC CONTROLLERS

◁ PC OPTIX

"This is the most responsive joystick tested. Superb for flight sims, it still manages to provide an instant response when playing shoot-'em-ups. The Optix has geared movement which feels great, and the variable throttle and auto-fire dials reaffirm its quality and versatility. Pure class. Well worth a look." (PC Format July '94)

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◁ PC PROPAD

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Dual port cards – twice the hassle?

Undoubtedly, the biggest problem people get when they plug in for a two-player game is... that they find their PC has actually only got one joystick port (which usually comes courtesy of their sound card or sometimes the motherboard). This usually induces an often hysterical state of shock brought on by the realisation that they've just spent over a £1,000 on a machine, forked out a further £100 or so on a sound card and squeezed the purse strings to the tune of a couple of budget joysticks only to find that their gleaming machine still can't manage a two-player game of *FIFA International Soccer*.

But hey! Didn't anyone ever tell you that the PC isn't a dedicated games machine?

Yep, if you want to play two-player games on your PC

you've got to dig into your pocket just one last time and buy a dual port card.

Enter stage left,

even more hysteria and confusion.

There are currently a number of dual port cards (or splitters) on the market costing around £20-40. But the grief doesn't end there. Because the PC is, well let's call it "sensitive" about what it has stuck inside it, things don't always go as planned and you often have to delve deep into your CONFIG.SYS disabling or even physically unplugging your existing game port to get things working. To make things even more confusing things can go AWOL depending on the number of functions (or inputs) your joystick has. For example, the Thrustmaster T1 wheel and pedals and some high-tech flight sticks will not work with just a splitter because there aren't enough pins to go round, consequently you'll need a dual port card if it is to work properly. For your average two-player game that requires two joysticks and not more than two fire buttons, however, a game card such as Suncom's Gameport 2000 or the Gravis Eliminator Game Card should be adequate, although you will need to disable all other joystick inputs on your machine to avoid things going all squiggly.

If you need something that can handle more inputs, such as the Thrustmaster T1 Wheel, their own dual port ACM game card (at around £40) comes highly recommended.

If in doubt, ring up the joystick manufacturer and ask them what they recommend.

Contact: Suncom 01285 642211/Thrustmaster 071 636 7099.



My Joystick



MANUFACTURER: Suncom
RRP: £14.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 3
AUTOFIRE: No, but it has got a switchable fire button selector.
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital
SUCKERS: No

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

Don't be put off by the packaging and market strategy – this is a very nice little stick that can cope admirably with most types of game. It's very light, sensitive and fits snugly in the hand. It's not the strongest of sticks and it's definitely not up to rough play. It is, however, guaranteed for 12 months. Buy it for your little brother and then nick it back!

SCORE: 7

Tornado

MANUFACTURER: Logic 3
RRP: £12.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: Yes



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A weird-looking stick this, with its funny pistol grip, shiny blue plastic base and bright red fire buttons. Not exactly what you'd call solidly constructed, but performed quite averagely, though the trigger position fire button was a bit sticky. Odd-looking, average stick.

SCORE: 6

Delta Ray

MANUFACTURER: Logic 3
RRP: £15.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 5
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital
SUCKERS: Yes



GENERAL CONSTRUCTIONS/COMMENTS:

Looks a bit naff but performs okay. Although it resembles a flight sim stick, it is actually more suited for games such as *TIE Fighter* as it lacks precise control. Fire buttons are good, however, and you could even manage the odd game of football.

SCORE: 7

Pinto

MANUFACTURER: Logic 3
RRP: £19.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital to Analogue
SUCKERS: Yes



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

What a funny little stick. It looks terribly cheap and nasty and made the loudest click of all the switched joysticks. Movement was okay and quite responsive, but the fire buttons just didn't feel that reassuring. Some people like this sort of stick, others don't. Don't even think about using it with a flight sim 'cos if anyone sees you they'll lock you up in a room with very thick, padded wall paper. Okay for arcade games though.

SCORE: 5

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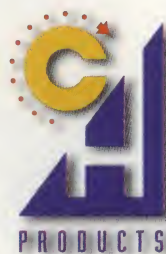
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Warrior 5



MANUFACTURER: Quickshot
RRP: £12.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: Yes

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A very average stick that looks and performs like so many others currently on the market. Not dire by any means, but not fabberony either, making it okay for use with most types of game. One thing we did find that kept happening with this joystick (and the many others like it) was the position of the autofire switch meant it could easily be nudged on during the frantic heat of gameplay, which was a trifle annoying to say the least. Overall performance not bad though.

SCORE: 6

AXYS



MANUFACTURER: Suncom
RRP: £24.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 3
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 5ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: No

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A solid stick with nothing special to recommend it except that it's adequate. The wrist support makes it look a bit gimmicky, though it does succeed in supporting the arm when used one handed. It's advertised for use with multimedia software (eh?) and is not really up to fierce gaming action.

SCORE: 5

Super Warrior



MANUFACTURER: Quickshot
RRP: £19.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 4
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: Yep

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A rather impressive looking stick with very responsive fire buttons and good directional control. Good for most types of game, this stick has a nice feel to it and is quite responsive. A good all-rounder that also features a rotary throttle control making it good for flight sims. Bundled with Quickshot calibration software for Windows.

SCORE: 7

Night Force



MANUFACTURER: Suncom
RRP: £19.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: Yes

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

Silly name, good stick. Good, responsive fire buttons, smooth movement and strongly made, this is a good all-round stick that fares well with most types of game. Pretty standard, though there's nothing wrong with that.

SCORE: 7

Jetstick

MANUFACTURER: CH
RRP: £44.95
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: NO
LENGTH OF CABLE: 7ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: NO



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This stick is aimed at beginners and is designed purely for flight sims and driving games. The handle feels extremely loose and it's good for *TFX*, but for *Indycar* the response was too slow. Needless to say, don't use it for *Sensi* unless you want to lose ten million to nil.

SCORE: 7

FX2000

MANUFACTURER: Suncom
RRP: £29.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: YES



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This stick feels great. It's extremely responsive and was great for *TFX* and *TIE Fighter* and not bad for *Sensi* either. It's a sturdy stick with switchable fire buttons and one of the best all-rounders of the bunch.

SCORE: 8

PC Optix

MANUFACTURER: QJ
RRP: £39.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 4
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
SUCKERS: YES
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital-to-Analogue



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

The PC Optix is well designed and has switchable analogue/digital selection. It was great for *Indycar* and *TFX* and not bad for *Zoo 2*, but a bit too loose for *Sensi*. Generally, a good stick. Our only niggle is that the handle feels a bit fragile and we have doubts as to how it will stand up to a couple of weeks frantic joystick waggling.

SCORE: 7

Hawk Junior

MANUFACTURER: Technoplus
RRP: £10.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
SUCKERS: YES
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

The name of this joystick suggests it is designed for kids, and indeed it is quite small, but in practice it's a good joystick by anyone's standards. It's strong and durable and performed well in all of our test games. If you're looking for a good multi-purpose joystick on the cheap, this is the one to go for.

SCORE: 7

Gravis Analogue Pro

MANUFACTURER: Gravis
RRP: £42.55
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 5
AUTOFIRE: NO
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
SUCKERS: NO
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This is the joystick to end all joysticks and we have no hesitation in awarding it the PC Zone Classic award. It was excellent for the sims and *Zoo 2*, and brilliantly responsive in *Sensi*. Its superior build quality guarantees a long life span and it has adjustable tension so you can configure it for flight sims and arcade games.

SCORE: 10

PC Raider

MANUFACTURER: QJ
RRP: £12.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 5ft
SUCKERS: YES
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This is a good, solid, reliable joystick which was great for the sims, and surprisingly good in *Sensi* considering it's an analogue stick. Curiously for an analogue stick (and to its advantage), the fire button has the same clicky response you would get from a digital stick. An excellent multi-purpose joystick at a good price.

SCORE: 8

Gravis Analogue



MANUFACTURER: Gravis
RRP: £34.00
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 3
AUTOFIRE: NO
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
SUCKERS: NO
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This has the same adjustable tension facility as the Pro and performs pretty much the same in the games we used for testing. It's basically a simpler, and consequently cheaper, version of the Analogue Pro and as such, is still an excellent joystick.

SCORE: 8

Quatro



MANUFACTURER: R: SPECTRA
VIDEO:
RRP: £xx.xx
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
SUCKERS: NO
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: DIGITAL-TO-ANALOGUE

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This one has switchable auto-fire for both buttons (or you can turn it off if you want) but it really doesn't matter because this stick didn't really set the world alight when used with any of the games. It feels a bit loose (which is

SCORE: 4

Sigma Ray

MANUFACTURER: R: SPECTRA
VIDEO:
RRP: £
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 5
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
SUCKERS: YES
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: DIGITAL



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

The Sigma Ray is an okay digital stick and was good for *Sensi* and *TIE Fighter*. Obviously it wasn't intended for use in games like *TFX*, but we tried it and... digital sticks and flight sims don't mix.

SCORE: 6

Python 5

MANUFACTURER: Quickshot
RRP: £12.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 5ft
SUCKERS: YES
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: DIGITAL



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This is an exact replica of the Hawk Junior joystick. No surprise then that for most of the games it performed in exactly the same way. Spookily, it wasn't as responsive for *Sensi* but that could just be the one they sent us. Still not bad, though.

SCORE: 7

Raider 5



MANUFACTURER: Quickshot
RRP: £17.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
SUCKERS: YES
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: ANALOGUE

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This is the most awkward, unresponsive, completely crap joystick we have ever had the misfortune to use. The joystick handle is on the left and the fire buttons are on the right so if you're left handed you're alright, and if you're not, you're sunk. It was disastrous with all the games we tested it with, it looks bloody awful and, well, just don't buy it, okay?

SCORE: 3

Merlin

MANUFACTURER: Suncom
RRP: £17.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: YES
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
SUCKERS: YES
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: ANALOGUE



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

The Merlin was particularly good for *TFX* and *Indycar* and not bad for the others. The fire buttons responded positively every time and the movement was fairly acceptable. This stick is a good choice if you mostly play flight sims but occasionally fancy a go at something a bit more hectic.

SCORE: 7

Grab Ya'self A Gamepad

Not everyone likes them, but when it comes to platform and footie games they really can't be beaten (ask any console user). There's more than ever available for the PC nowadays and some even have a little screw-in joystick!

Logipad Gamepad



MANUFACTURER: Logipad
RRP: £17.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 6
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Switched

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This one doesn't feel as solid as the other gamepads we looked at. In fact it felt a bit loose. The fire buttons were very sensitive though. It's not particularly bad and will do the job for most arcade games, but it's not particularly good either.

SCORE: 6

Starfighter 5



MANUFACTURER: Quickshot
RRP: £10.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

The Starfighter's best point is it's very light and so comfortable to use. Movement feels a bit squidgey and it doesn't quite have the solid construction of the other pads. Squidgeyness aside though, this is a good gamepad with automatic centring and is reasonably durable.

SCORE: 7

Firestorm Game Controller



MANUFACTURER: Primax
RRP: £10.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 4
AUTOFIRE: No
LENGTH OF CABLE: 1.5m
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This is a scaled-down version of the Firestorm Remote. It looks just as good, has a precise response to in-game movements and, like its big brother, is very solid in design. A good one-player gamepad.

SCORE: 7

Gamester PC Gamepad



MANUFACTURER: LMP
RRP: £14.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 4 + 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE:

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This is a quality gamepad. The control panel responds positively to movement, it has two extra buttons (which you can turn off if you like) and it performed well in everything we threw at it. It doesn't reach the heady heights of the Gravis, but it's up there with the best of them.

SCORE: 8

Command Control Pad



MANUFACTURER: Suncom
RRP: £19.99
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 5!
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This one is a rather large and non-descript gamepad that really fills the hands. Large directional pad is quite responsive and the fire buttons are more than adequate. Comes with free *Blakestone: Aliens Of Gold* game. Good if you've got big hands.

SCORE: 7

Game Star



MANUFACTURER: Enromax
RRP: £39.95
NUMBER OF FIRE
BUTTONS: 6 (yes — 6!)
AUTOFIRE: Yes (Turbo)
LENGTH OF CABLE: 5ft

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

This is a pre-production prototype we got hold of and rather good it is too. You plug it into your keyboard and you can program the fire buttons to copy any keyboard function. Basically this means that the pad will work with any game that uses the keys, and makes setting games up to run with the gamepad much easier. Proved, generally, very promising and they're thinking of bundling it with *Wolfenstein*. Whizzo

SCORE: 8

Gravis Gamepad

MANUFACTURER: Gravis
RRP: £21.30
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 4
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6FT
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital-to-analogue

**GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:**

Gravis seems to have thought of everything for this one. This is a very solid gamepad which is auto-calibrating, comes with a removable joystick and has a left-handed option. The package includes a game card conflict detection program, calibration software and a free *Commander Keen* game (the classic shareware platform thingy). In use, the gamepad is very responsive and the firebuttons feel firm and have a positive contact. Overall, the Gravis Gamepad is well designed and constructed. This is the premier gamepad for arcade style games.

SCORE: 10

Firestorm Remote

MANUFACTURER: Primax
RRP: £53.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 4 + 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: Not applicable. 7 metres range
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital

**GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:**

The Firestorm Infra-red game controller comes with two remote control gamepads. They are very solid, feel comfortable to use, and are definitely among the most stylish of the bunch. To top it all, Primax is giving away a free copy of *Doom* with every package.

SCORE: 8

Eagle

MANUFACTURER: Technoplus
RRP: £14.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6FT
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital

**GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:**

Winner of the least imaginatively designed gamepad in the entire universe. No outrageously futuristic pointy bits for this one, mate. The Eagle is a normal, friendly, functional gamepad that never offended anyone. Performs adequately and... it's cheap! Hurrah!

SCORE: 7

PC Propad

MANUFACTURER: QJ
RRP: £14.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6FT
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital

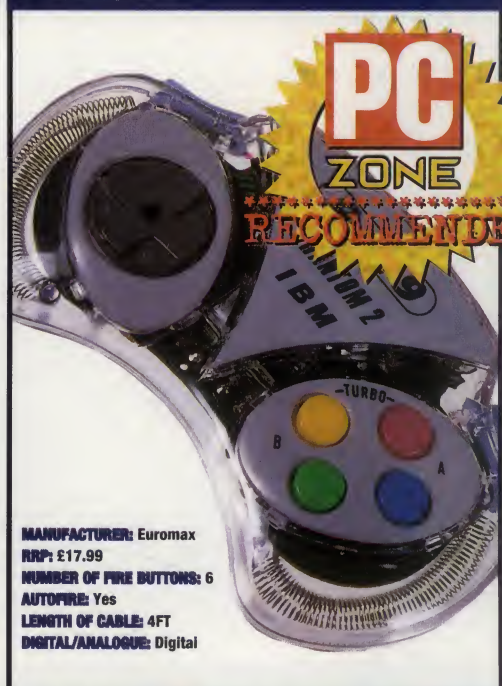
**GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:**

The Propad looks pretty wacky, even by gamepad standards. It's very light and performed okay, but some people may find its odd shape off-putting. Then again, there's probably lots of weirdos out there who won't. Curiously, the autofire has two speeds you can set yourself. Not bad, but hey man, it's weird.

SCORE: 5

Phantom 2

MANUFACTURER: Euromax
RRP: £17.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 6
AUTOFIRE: Yes
LENGTH OF CABLE: 4FT
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Digital

**GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:**

Very responsive, very light, and very sexy (er, from a cosmetic point of view). It has oodles of fire buttons, a mini joystick attachment, and comes second in performance only to the Gravis Gamepad. Yes, we liked this one.

SCORE: 8

Specialist Stuff

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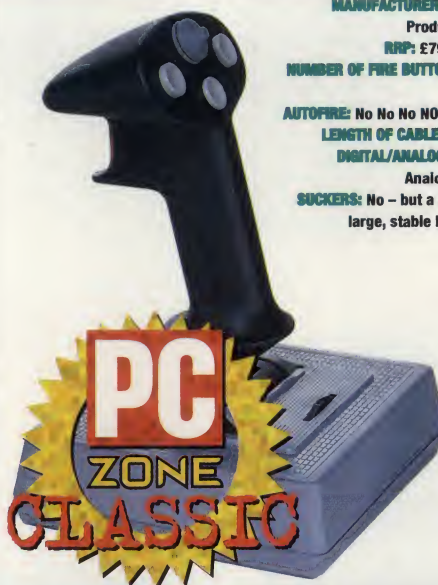
MANUFACTURER: Suncom Technologies
RRP: £64.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 4
AUTOFIRE: No! Don't be stupid!
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: Yes – and a twist on clamp (Max. 1 5/8 in.)

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A nicely finished and well-built add-on that can be used to good effect with flight sims and driving games alike. Full-size controls are both responsive and smooth, making it a good compromise for racing games and flight sims as long as it's not too frantic.

SCORE: 7

Flightstick Pro



MANUFACTURER: CH Products
RRP: £79.95
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 4
AUTOFIRE: No No No NO NO!
LENGTH OF CABLE: 7ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: No – but a very large, stable base

GENERAL CONSTRUCTIONS/COMMENTS:

A superior stick in terms of quality and build that excels itself at flight sims whilst still being quite usable with other types of game. Very responsive and comfortable to use with loads of features including throttle, trims and calibration software. Quite simply the best!

SCORE: 10

Flightstick



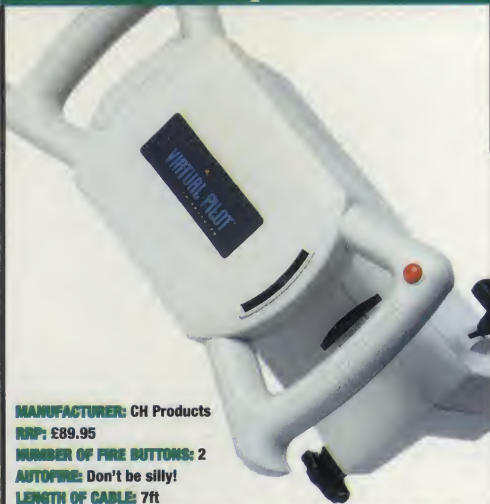
MANUFACTURER: CH Products
RRP: £44.95
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Nooooo!
LENGTH OF CABLE: 7ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: No – but a large, stable base

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A very nice stick in terms of construction and performance. Like its big brother, the Flightstick Pro, it is also a good all-rounder and represents good value at almost half the price of its higher spec relative.

SCORE: 7

Virtual Pilot Airplane Yoke



MANUFACTURER: CH Products
RRP: £89.95
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Don't be silly!
LENGTH OF CABLE: 7ft
SUCKERS: No – but it does have a couple of clamps that do lock the unit onto your desk quite firmly as long as you're gentle.

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

Nicely finished and comfortable to use, this unit works well with "anorak" type flight sims, but is not up to games that require fast responses such as *TIE Fighter*. General control is good and response is fair, though at the price, this is a peripheral for the dedicated pilot.

SCORE: 6

Flight Max



MANUFACTURER: Suncom Technologies
RRP: £39.99
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 2
AUTOFIRE: Nope
LENGTH OF CABLE: 6ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: No – but fairly large base for good stability.

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

A well-built stick, similar in construction to the Flightstick with lots of options and features including: on-board rudder and throttle controls, signal selector (which allows you to choose the functions of each fire buttons) and X & Y trimmers for centring. Responsive and comfortable to use, it makes for a good all-round flight stick.

SCORE: 7

Mark I Flight Control System



MANUFACTURER: Paper Logic
RRP: £99.95
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 4
AUTOFIRE: Don't be ridiculous – this is a man's stick!
LENGTH OF CABLE: 7ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: Nope – see above!

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

Very similar to its big brother (though not quite as stiff to use), it is a decent enough stick in its own right. Very responsive and comfortable and supported by a lot of software. You will need a dual port card, however, (as you will with the Pro FCS) to use all the buttons.

SCORE: 7

Pro Flight Control System

MANUFACTURER: Paper Logic
RRP: £149.95
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 4
AUTOFIRE: Noooo!
LENGTH OF CABLE: 7ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Analogue
SUCKERS: No - but they do recommend that you find a way of attaching it to your desk - you'd be foolish not to!



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

Very solid, if a little workman-like, the PFGS is a solid piece of engineering that is actually modelled on the F-4 Phantom stick. It takes a little time to get used to (it feels very stiff at first - imitating the real feel of flying a jet), but once mastered it is very responsive indeed, especially impressive if the software supports the HAT switch and used in conjunction with the Mark II Weapons Control System. One for the flight sim junkie.

SCORE: 8

Mark II Weapons Control System

MANUFACTURER: Paper Logic
RRP: £149.95
NUMBER OF FIRE BUTTONS: 6+1 switch
AUTOFIRE: No (see above)
LENGTH OF CABLE: 7ft
DIGITAL/ANALOGUE: Switchable
SUCKERS: No!



GENERAL CONSTRUCTION/COMMENTS:

When used in conjunction with either of the Thrustmaster FCS', this is the closest you're going to get to sitting in a real cock-pit. It either plugs into your second game port or in your keyboard input and has six fully-programmable buttons, a digital/analog switch and an LED lighting system that indicates what functions are activated. Solid and workman-like, flight sim fanatics need only apply.

SCORE: 7



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SEND YOUR POST TO: **WORDPROCESSOR, PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER ST. LONDON W1P 7HJ**



Hate mail for the Hackmasters, moans about software houses, expensive hacks, gripes about CD products... Why, you are a bitter and twisted bunch aren't you?

HACKMASTER HATE MAIL

DEAR PC ZONE

I'm writing to complain about one small thing! I'M SICK AND TIRED OF HACKMASTERS. They seem to forget that there are people out there who wouldn't know how to use *debug* if it came up to them and bit them on the arse. Living in Dublin, I have to pay nearly four pounds every month for this magazine, and yes, every month I open it up and I see pages and pages of The Hackmasters and their hexadecimal rubbish. I do not doubt that the people behind The Hackmasters are good at what they do, but for God's sake just give some simple little cheats that don't require a degree in computer applications to understand! I do, however, remain a loyal PC Zone reader and look forward to the next issue (with some simple cheats).

Paul May, Raheny, Dublin

I don't wish to seem condescending at all (oh, sod that I'll be as condescending as I damn well like) but I can't help feeling that you're a) incapable of reading simple instructions, or b) a moaning little toe-rag.

Now, I may be new around here, but looking at last month's smorgasbord of Hackmaster delights I noticed a section on the first page which reads, and I quote "...It (debug) is the program we use most in the Hackmaster Zone, and since it is the most user-unfriendly program on this planet, a brief introduction/explanation is necessary. Here's a step-by-step guide to a debug hack." There then follows (now this is the really clever bit, but if you sit down and work out what all the letters put together actually spell out you might be all right) a simple step-by-step guide on how to use debug. My God. Informative journalism does exist after all. As you can see from this month's Troubleshooter section, there are still more hacks and cheats to help you crack into the very latest games. Of course, if a simple cheat mode is available... we'll print it - otherwise we just do our best.

CREEPING BASTARD

WHAT A WONDERFUL magazine. I'm glad I have become a subscriber. As you select subscribers to pass their opinion on the top game, would it be possible to invite me down when you review *Aces of the Deep* as I am into submarine sims? I know this is creeping, but what the hell? If you don't creep you

don't get anywhere. Please keep up the good work.

Mark Johnston, Polesworth, Staffs

Er... no, you cannot. If I could just amend your own comments slightly, I feel compelled to reply with "what the hell... if you creep you don't get anywhere but the snotty creep bin".

SHOOT THE DISK EDITOR

I'M NOT happy... Let me explain. Today, I went into my local WH Smiths and happened to spot your September 1994 issue on one of the shelves... (for God's sake, get to the point - Ed.) ...I glanced inside to see what delights the CD would contain, and I quote from the blurb on page five, "...and all the shareware that's reviewed in *Off The Boards*".

My question is, therefore, whereabouts on the CD have you hidden the shareware versions of *Hocus Pocus*, *One Must Fall*, *Jazz Jackrabbit* and *Epic Pinball 3*? The reason why I bought the magazine was that I thought these programs would be included on the CD. After all, one of the benefits of CD-ROM is that you can provide a far greater amount of software to your readers than you ever could on floppies.

To avoid further misunderstandings, you should either change the blurb or mark clearly against each review whether or not the program can be found on that issue's CD.

Joe Kovacs, Hayes, Middx

Right, apparently there was a bit of a cock-up just before the CD was sent off to press and a few of the games which we had scheduled didn't end up on here. Why? Well, it would appear that as with full-price software, shareware titles are prone to a certain degree of slippage, and as a result *Jazz Jackrabbit* and *One Must Fall* failed to meet our deadline. *Hocus Pocus* actually ended up on a previous disc (Don't ask me how. There was obviously some kind of temporal warp thing involved.) and *Epic Pinball 3* isn't actually a shareware game - which would explain why we haven't given it away for free (we'd get strung up and vigorously sued and we wouldn't want that would we?).

Anyway, excuses aside we have now located the man responsible and have had him shot.

ABSOLUTE NUT-CASE

TO ALL THOSE budding enthusiasts who enjoy ruining their neighbours lives... Here's a neat tip. Buy a small 10 to 15-watt guitar amp (you can pick one up second hand for about £50) and then using a double-ended lead you can connect it up to your sound board. The power is amazing! Try situating it behind your head while playing *IndyCar Racing*. Alternatively, you could try and do the same thing with your Hi-Fi system... it's bound to get the neighbours complaining.

Also, I have a couple of questions:

a) If I bought a CD-ROM in the US, would I be able to use it in the UK?

b) I have been looking at the Bluepoint 1CD300 CD-ROM drive and they say it uses an IDE interface -

would it be compatible with my SoundBlaster v2?

Graham Libaert, Fleet, Hants

To answer your questions... you shouldn't have too much trouble with a US drive, and yes, an IDE CD-ROM should work with a SoundBlaster 2. The IDE interface means that you don't need to use a SCSI type connector like those found on multi-media sound cards; they'll simply plug into your system.

As for your earlier comments, well er... yes, it sounds super. You're obviously quite utterly mad and are in desperate need of some kind of treatment, but hey? Who am I to judge?

DOOMED INTERNET

THE INTERNET... what a gorgeous idea that was. I find it amazingly useful for finding the latest *Doom* levels, art gallery pictures, Ultrasound utilities, etc., etc. I was wondering if PC Zone would consider making space for writing down useful addresses or if they would consider making a games list (reviews, top ten, shareware) on the network (via a PC Zone arena perhaps?)

Also, why doesn't PC Zone have a competition to see who can make the best *Doom* level?

Finally, are there any laws concerning BBSS? Such as what types of software can be used on them without being hounded by lawyers moaning about infringement of copyright etc?

ps I know plenty of excellent *Doom* sites with everything from graphics to WADS

A. T. Ritchie, Oxford

We have been considering the possibilities of a PC Zone forum on CompuServe for some time. Okay, it's not an Internet forum, but it's just as easily accessible. As it is, you can already communicate with us in the usual netsurfing, cyberdude-type way by sending us some e-mail on CompuServe at Wordprocessor, PC ZONE, 100142, 2152, or alternatively on the Internet on s0p6@exnet.com. All net-geek talk and Wired inspired cyberspeak will be utterly ignored because to be honest... it's completely and utterly sad.

As far as software and BBSs go, you have to be reasonably careful about what you are being seen to distribute... so hard-core tits'n'bum-type graphics files, interactive porn and gruesome pictures of people being hacked up into little pieces are pretty much a no-no. Also, you have to be careful that you're not doing anything that could be deemed as piracy... shareware, freeware and PD stuff is fine, but anything more than that and you are going to get your arse kicked big time.

ps So do we.

FLUFFY DICE AND PENTIUMS

I USE my current PC (a 486DX33) mainly for games and desktop publishing/wordprocessing, and I was wondering what the best PC for this would be if cost was absolutely no object. I was thinking of a Pentium-based PC with lots of RAM, a big hard drive etc. However, I'm not sure about anything else such as CD-ROMs and so forth. I would appreciate it very



much if you list out a good spec for the ultimate games/Windows PC.

Andrew Smith, Blackpool

Good grief... money no object eh? Well, you could really go to town on this one so we all sat down and had a good, hard think, went to the pub, thought some more and came up with this... The PC Zone "complete ninja-bastard" PC:

P5-100 Pentium-based system.

PCI local bus.

2Gb IDE hard drive.

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Quad speed CD-ROM drive.

A speedy 24-bit graphics card with about 2Mb (or more if possible) on board.

SoundBlaster AWE32 or a Gravis Ultrasound Max.

Reelmagic MPEG graphics card.

14,400 baud modem.

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One of those funny-shaped Microsoft ergonomic keyboards.

A really expensive laser printer.

A mouse (either a really good one, or alternatively a funny-coloured one like the ones in this month's news).

Thrustmaster Flight Control System.

Gravis gamepad (x2).

Go faster stripes.

Fluffy dice (pink, of course).

A HACK THAT WORKS - SORT OF

IN THE LATEST issue of PC Zone you printed a hack for UFO and it works... for about a month of game time. The base created is very "yippy-dippy" (as my wife would say), but costs more than the national debt to run. As a result you may have researched the Avenger at the end of month one, but by month two you have been closed down due to spending, of which the words Marcos, Imelda and shoes come to mind. Any chances of an all-singing, all-dancing hack which fixes the cash problems as well?

M.E. Hicks, Essex

The self-proclaimed "sons of the ghetto", the Hackmasters, seemed totally perplexed by your problem when we presented it to them, and whilst they do boast of being "techno whizzes", they were, to use the technical term, stumped. Having been totally and utterly put to shame the merry gang are now beavering away trying to look into this, and if they actually come up with anything we'll print it as soon as we can. Should they fail we shall no doubt send them forth into the street and have them flogged... or something.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Show-off

As a subscriber to your vicious, profane, irreverent and rather sympathetic magazine, I am quite used to your readers writing to complain that they can't afford the 90MHz Pentium with 32Mb needed to get Ultima XXV up off its knees, or if they can afford the (ahem) Ninja PC, they can't get the byzantine DOS config. files to give them more than 347k of low RAM.

"Get a life!" say I. I'm climbing the next mountain now, namely the difficulty of running CD-ROM software. I have only had the CD-ROM drive for a few months, so the games I've tried are limited, but this summary will give you the idea.

Windows: Fine once configured.

Rebel Assault: Wouldn't run. When I let it auto-configure, it worked, but *Windows* didn't. When I reconfigured it for *Windows*, it stopped working. I finally found that the config for RA was incompatible with that for *Windows*. I solved this with DOS 6.0 multi boot feature.

7th Guest: Worked, but needed VESA driver that wasn't supplied.

Gabriel Knight CD: Worked with RA config. in DOS. *Windows Quick Time* thang worked, but GK hung the machine. Even software from the same company isn't consistent!

LucasArts PC Zone Demo: Wouldn't run with sound... even after using the boot disk.

In summary, m'lud, the developers are taking the piss! It's not as if I've got weird kit or anything... SoundBlaster and Creative Labs gear is about as mainstream as you can get! I'd love to buy a number of the newer CD games, but I buy games to relax... not to get all stressed out cursing some illiterate, teenaged, pizza-faced, malnourished development team for not having the professionalism to sort out their product before putting it out to retail.

Okay, I feel better now....

Neil Warne, Geneva, Switzerland

You have a point. The games you mentioned are pretty much all class-A products from their respective publishers and all were flawed when initially released. Without wishing to get too critical and pissing off an awful lot of people with very good lawyers, I think that the best thing for me to say is that the reason many of the games are released with a number of bugs is that they are rushed to retail. Software houses claim not to be able to predict every conceivable system set-up and, as a result, if a product is dead late because either a) the programmer is a lazy bastard, or b) the whole project was ridiculously over ambitious and an over-zealous marketing department insisted on a release date sometime this century, the software house will release something as soon as it works on at least a few systems. Any problems beyond launch can be sorted out with patch disks and "oops, we fucked up... sorry" messages appearing on CompuServe and in magazines. There's no point mentioning any specific games, but there have been a number released lately which are so bugged it's hardly feasible. You'd have thought that developers would beta-test products on the "average Joe" machine. But instead it seems to you and I that they must've been tested on something with all sorts of home-made bits of which can only be purchased at the AI's Computer Shack somewhere in deepest Swaziland. (I know someone that has their number if you're interested.)

MOAN, MOAN, MOAN

THIS IS Another annoyed letter at game manufacturers. Don't get the wrong idea... I like games, that's why I'm a subscriber to your brilliant mag. (Oh God, not another creep - Ed.)

Anyway, it started like this... Several months after buying a CD-ROM and sound card, and adding 24.6 inches to my 5.25 inch disk box to hold all of the CD's, I decided to splurge out some more. Being a Trekkie, I couldn't miss *Star Trek 25th Anniversary* on CD-ROM. "Enhanced Cinematic Multi-media" it said... Brilliant! I thought. Who cares what it means. Check the requirements... (there then follows a really tedious verbatim copy of the entire requirements sticker from the side of the box which we shall refrain from printing on the grounds that it is in fact - boring as hell - Ed) ...and I buy it.

Upon getting it home I find that it actually requires 9Mb of hard disk space in order to install! There's no mention of this on the box at all, and there's no custom or express install option either.

When I bought the machine four years ago (another incredibly boring spec description then followed which we have helpfully edited out - Ed.) we partitioned the hard drive to C: and D: (D: for games) and we've already run out of space, so installing a CD game is quite difficult.

My point is (at last - Ed.), surely CD-ROM game manufacturers should display the amount of hard disk space required. Most CD games require some space, but don't you think that 9Mb is ridiculous? CD-ROMs are storage mediums capable of holding 600Mb of code. Surely you must need to write to HD only for saving - and those files which have to be accessed quickly shouldn't take up much room.

I feel that I've been let down... reduced to a tiny neutron in my little atom microcosm. I wasted £39.99 on a game which I can't even play unless I take several other games (which I thoroughly enjoy) off the hard drive.

Neil Henderson, Edinburgh

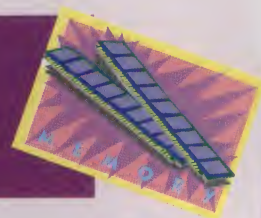
If you really want to play *Star Trek 25th Anniversary* (and I have to say it is a really smart CD game), then surely the sacrifice of 9Mb of games isn't too much of a sacrifice? All games require some space, and the more games you buy, the more space you'll need. If you bought and played lots of games that all required 1Mb of installation space, would you still be whining and wingeing?

As CD games get more advanced and CD-ROM drives remain as simple 320k/s devices you are going to need a way of accessing some information really quickly. There are now a number of CD products out there which install up to 20Mb of code to your hard drive... just think how much of a moan you could have then!

You say you've got a 120Mb hard drive which has been partitioned into two separate sections. Well, I would say that the most obvious thing to do then would be to rearrange the way you utilise space on your hard drive. Isn't this obvious? Or am I being too radical here? Come on now... the time you've spent writing to me could have been spent doing two other things that would be far more productive: a) sorting your PC out into a more sensible arrangement, and b) playing the game which you spent the £40 on. Next... Z



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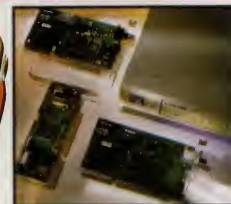
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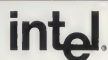
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OFF THE BOARDS

Relive the Gulf War – or perhaps just the arcade games of the seventies. Mark Burgess takes a look at the world of shareware and sharpens up his pencils.

DESERT STORM

WELL, HERE we have a computer game based on the war in the Gulf. Quite a few of those about and quite a few people who think that the war in the Gulf was a computer game. This one is not a strategy game, nor a flight sim. It's a collection of shooting games, based on very old models indeed. The first is a direct *Missile Defence* clone, only without the excitement. The second is like the old *Shooting Gallery* – people appear at windows and you shoot them with a little cross-hair cursor. They explode in a little blob of gore. (You can turn the "bloodiness" off, but you'd have to be awfully squeamish for it to upset you.) Registration brings you two more games: *Tanks* and *Tomahawks*, which look like more of the same. Okay if you liked *Nightraid*.

Shareware from: David Johndrow for Pod Bay Enterprises
Registration: \$22.95 (from Testware)
Needs: 286 or better, VGA
Supports: Most sound cards



The UN has its place I guess, but when push comes to shove: send in the Marines. (Top) the Barefoot platoon. (Left) An Iran Air jumbo gets the schnitz.

DEPTH DWELLERS-THE QUEST

ADOOM CLONE. When *Depth Dwellers* first appeared on BBSs, no one was much impressed, but it's one of the games that quickly improves with playing. The general plot is that you run, jump, duck and crawl through labyrinthine corridors to rescue hostages. There are guards absolutely everywhere. They're armed with a mixture of weapons, from plasma rifles to flame-throwers, and you cannot survive more than a couple of hits. There are hidden areas aplenty, full of ammo, weapons, first-aid kits and treasure. But you can't linger too long because the guards are killing the prisoners. You feel as guilty as hell when you emerge with your pockets packed full of loot just in time to see an innocent hostage vaporized.

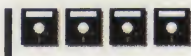
Some of the hostages are chained to the walls and others wander aimlessly about – often into your line of fire. Get close to them and press "t" to transport them to safety. I know it's fun watching them get killed, but you get points for survivors. In some ways this is a bizarre cross between *Blake Stone* and *Doom*.

The backgrounds are as good as in *Doom* and range from Gothic to Geiger. The weapons are as much fun and the AI of the enemies is as good. The problem is with the sprites: the enemies (called Ri, I think) are flat and unexciting. The sound needs more attention, too. However, *Depth Dwellers* is far better than it looks and you will soon get hooked.

Shareware from: TriSoft
Registration: £39.95 from TriSoft
Needs: 386 or better, VGA, 4MB HD space free
Supports: AdLib/SoundBlaster and accepts keyboard, keyboard & mouse, or keyboard & joystick



It's not *Doom* and it's not the sequel, but *Depth Dwellers* has a gentle charm all of its own.

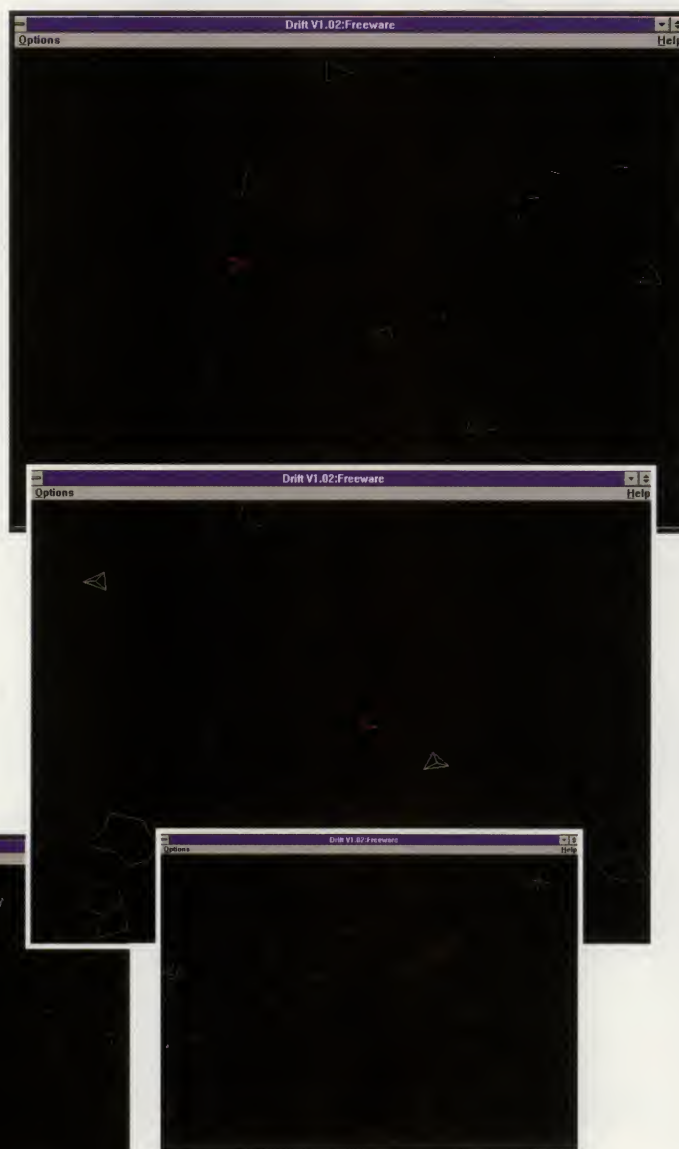
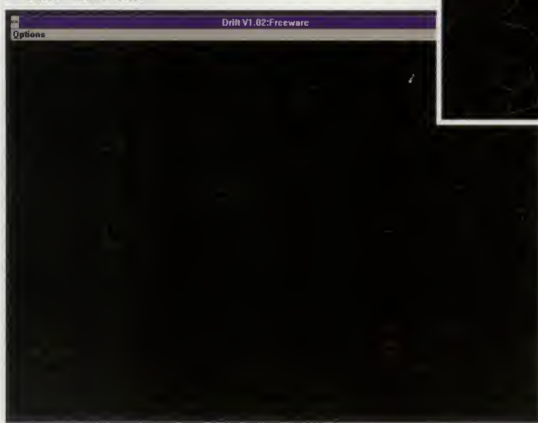


DRIFT

I WAS ONLY joking last month, honest! But here it is: this month's *Asteroids* clone. *Drift* runs under *Windows* and is close in look and feel to the original. The ship has inertia and as you fire, the recoil of the cannon propels the ship backwards. As for plot; the game is set in 5300 with you in command of a model v3x22 Driftmaster. You are exploring the dreaded Vhol Drift – an asteroid field near the Formalhault system. As well as the asteroids to contend with there are aliens, the evil Polygunzz (tee hee).

Drift is actually a tough version and I never made it past the second level. The help file has a potted history of other *Asteroid* clones, rightly acknowledging the superiority of *Hyperoids*. This version of *Drift* (v. 1.02) is the last freeware revision. Future versions will be shareware and have modem play. Now that's worth waiting for.

Freeware from: Dirk Vandenheuvel
Needs: Anything that runs *Windows 3.1x*



Back to vector graphics with the minimalist *Drift*, a classic version of the arcade original

This month's programs

CompuServe

Forum	Section	Program	Filename	Size
GAMERS	Action Games	Desert Storm	dscmvp.zip	622543
		Drift	drift.zip	40246
	Hot Games Download	Depth Dwellers	depth.zip	1293395
WINDOWS SHAREWARE				
	Gen Win Utils	Barclock	wbarcl.zip	814075
	Number Related	WinHP	winhp9.zip	29444
		WinPlot	winplot.zip	219535
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SHAREWARE



This is software that asks for a registration fee, either after a specific time or "if found useful". The fee varies enormously and you are morally obliged to pay it or stop using the program although it is true that many programs ask you to send \$5 to an address in Wichita. A leading shareware author recently estimated that about 90% of users don't register. Registration brings the latest version of the program, a place on the mailing list for updates and, often, a properly printed manual. Not to mention a warm glow of moral satisfaction.

OTHERS



Bannerware/Adware:
 These are programs where the author does not ask for any payment but reserves copyright. This means that you have a free license to use and copy the game.

DEMONSTRATIONS



Many commercial software houses will release a playable demo of their latest games so that you have some idea of what you're expected to pay £50 for. Not often found in libraries, they tend to live on the cover of magazines or on bulletin boards.

WHAT DO YOU GET?



The disk should contain a file called READ.ME or README.1ST. Read it by typing TYPE README.1ST | MORE. There will also be some sort of batch (.BAT) file in the disk. Typing in the name of it should load the program.

Most programs will come in archived form. This is because the library is trying to fit as much information as possible on a 760k disk. The files will have extensions such as .ARC, .ARJ, .LHA, .PAK, or .ZIP. However, the disk will come with a program that will decompress the files, together with instructions on how to use it.

Off the Boards goes off to college



So, you've got the A level results and now you're ready to take your place at the Dept. of Dead Hard Sums, Nerdley University. Your pencils are sharpened, there's a spring in your step and lots of multi-coloured biros in your pocket. What more could you need? Why, some cheap software to do all the hard work, of course. Take a look at this lot.

WINHP

FIRST OFF, a calculator. All students need one – even if you're just working out how many pints you can afford. Every techie aspires to a Hewlett-Packard calculator. These say "serious scientist" like a stethoscope says doctor. *WinHP* is a Hewlett-Packard type calculator for *Windows*. All the keys, functions and features of the plastic original are here. A very handy thing to have on your desktop – give the crap *Windows*' calculator the boot and install this one.

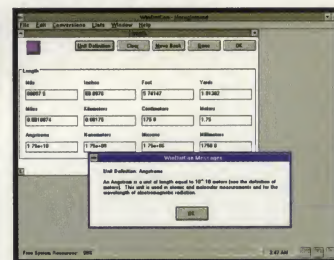
Shareware from: Neal Conrardy
Registration: \$5
Needs: *Windows 3.0* or later



WINDATCON

THIS IS A *Windows* data conversion program, which covers angle, area, energy, length, power, pressure, temperature, boiling points, speed, acceleration, time, volume and weight. There are thousands of units to convert from or to. The program also comes with a list of boiling points, SI prefixes and densities. If you have ever read a scientific paper more than a decade old, you'll need this. You can re-configure the windows to your taste.

Shareware from: Vogel Scientific Software
Registration: \$25
Needs: *Windows 3.0* or later, EGA/VGA



WINPLOT

WINPLOT will produce pretty graphs from just about any sort of data. In common with most graphing programs you generate the data first as an ASCII file and the graphing program then reads it. The interactive operation includes Zoom-Pan-Scroll along with point-by-point analysis and Cartesian, Polar and LOG scales with up to 16 signals by 32000 samples. Customisable line/symbol colour, size and type with postscript-quality printer output. Batch file like automatic operation for use with data acquisition systems or your own programs. Basic signal processing including: spectral analysis, integration, differentiation and various statistics.

WinPLOT is not intended for business-type presentation graphics, so you can't do pie or bar charts. It's designed to be a simple data analysis tool for engineers and scientists.

Shareware from: Paul Woodworth In Touch Software
Registration: £10.00 from In Touch
Needs: *Windows 3.1* or above



LANDSCAPE EXPLORER

DOING GEOGRAPHY? Ignore the jeers. Any clown can do media studies. I know someone who met a girl while studying geography – more than you can say for chemistry, for instance – and they're now married and living somewhere near Croydon. Brilliant, eh?

One of the really boring things about geography is doing those cross sections. You have to trace all the contour lines, then draw a line through the bit you're interested in, then draw lines down to a base and then draw in the heights. However, *Landscape Explorer* is a brilliant program that does all that for you. Scan the map and open the file. Trace the major contours and select Map Definition. The program draws a map. You can have the usual cross section or you can rotate and tilt the 3D model anyway you like.

Landscape Explorer will translate any flat, two-dimensional map into a full 3D representation which can be examined from any viewpoint. You don't have to be a geography student to enjoy it. Walkers, cyclists, even military historians and wargamers will find a use for it.

You can choose the colours for the contours (so that everything above the snowline is in shades of blue or red) and alter the angle of light to throw features into sharp relief.

Landscape Explorer looks a bit daunting at first, but if you play around with the sample landscapes provided, you soon get the hang of it. The shareware version is a 30 days' evaluation – registration gets you more colour schemes and more sample files.

Shareware from: Kevin Wolley for WolleySoft
Registration: £40
Needs: 486, 8MB (16 recommended!), *Windows 3.1* or later

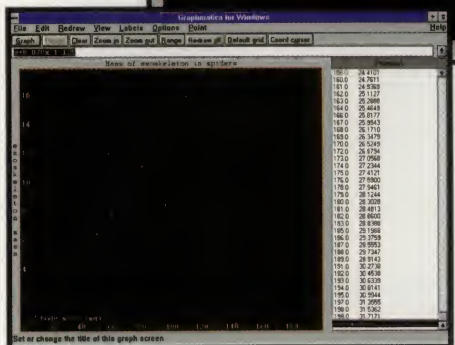
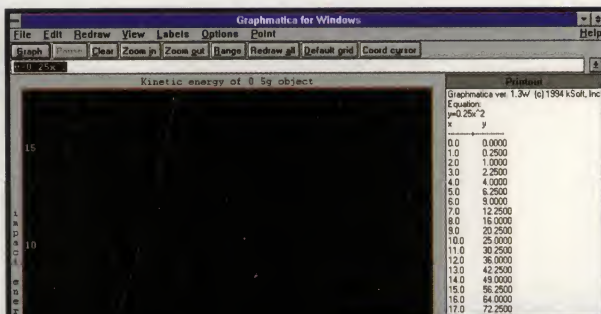


GRAPHMATICA

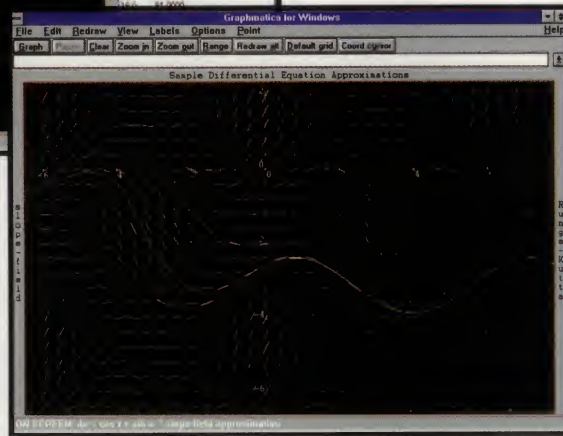
GRAPHMATICA (for DOS or Windows) is another graphing program, but this time formulae are entered in a text box. You can use implied multiplication and a complete library of mathematical functions (including trig). You can leave out parentheses and even forget about isolating variables before graphing. The program remembers the last 25 equations you typed in or loaded from a file.

Graphmatica automatically determines the type of graph based on the variables used, and alters the sampling rate while graphing to make sure steep graphs, like $y = \tan x$, are tracked correctly. You can re-size the graph or reset the range with ease, and the program will re-draw everything for you. There are six styles of graph and a full help file explains the basics of each type. Graphmatica also comes with a selection of demo files that show you examples of each type of equation.

Shareware from: Keith Hertz for KSoft
Registration: \$20
Needs: Will run on most computers and displays



(Left) Impact damage depends on velocity rather than mass and (Below right) who would have believed that of spiders?



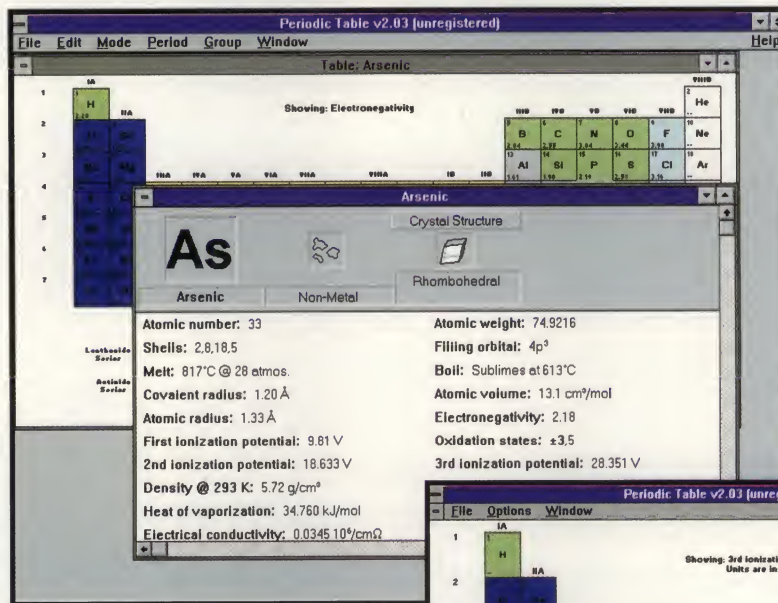
PERIODIC TABLE

OH, so you are doing chemistry. Well this is what you need on your hard disk.

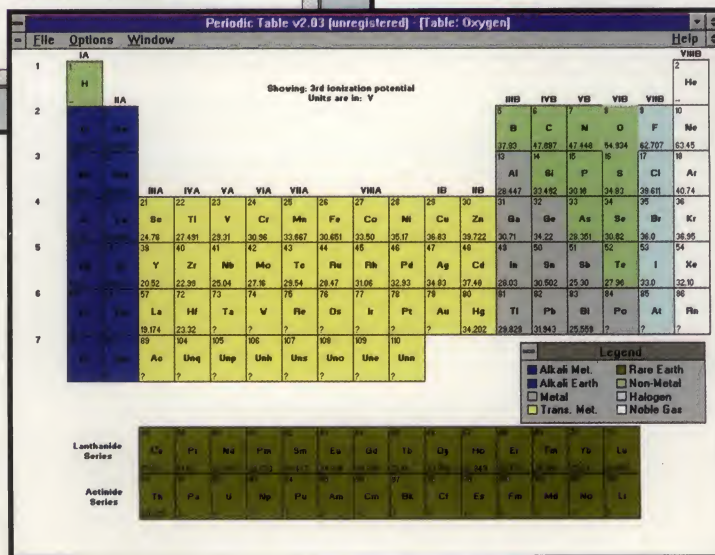
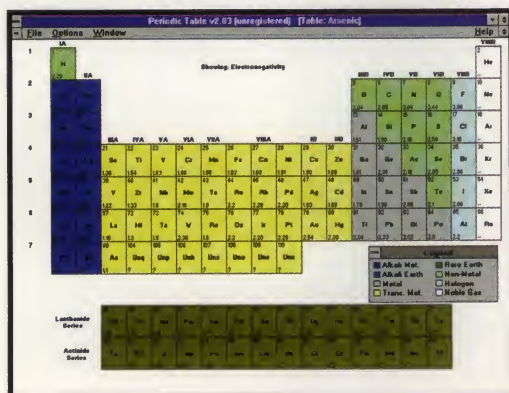
Periodic Table has been around for some years, but the latest version - 2.03 - is the business. It provides a display that covers everything from Atomic weight to shell configuration and date of discovery. You can switch between the various displays easily.

Where this program really scores is with the best on-line manual since SkyMap. It is virtually a textbook on atomic structure and the nature of bonds. Subjects, such as quantum chromodynamics, are neatly and accurately summarised. Shareware version is for 30 days' evaluation. A printed version of this manual is available for a small fee.

Shareware from: R S Luchman for SMI Corporation
Registration: \$15
Needs: Windows 3.1



Everything you need to know about all the elements, including a few they haven't found yet. Who said that chemistry is boring? Look at Margaret Thatcher - she got a chemistry degree and ended up as... (enough! - PC Zone lawyers).



BUYERS GUIDE

It has grown a beard and has streaks of grey in its hair. It is also wearing what looks like a Groucho Marx false nose, mustache and glasses, but underneath it's still the Buyers Guide – back from its "holiday".

Issue 1 – April 1993

Dune II
(89: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99
Civilization meets *Sim City* in a frantic spice 'em up.

Lemmings 2: The Tribes
(88: Recommended) Psygnosis – Puzzle £39.99
A brilliant reworking of one of the best computer games ever written.

Ragnarok
(60) Mirage – Board Game £35.99
As the great man said: if you like this sort of thing, this sort of thing you like. Let down by too many inessential, flashy bits and not enough on the main, interesting idea. As stand-alone shareware, the King's Table would rate 75%.

Reach For The Skies
(52) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £35.99
Uninspired ww2 flight sim with pretensions to strategy that don't stand up to close inspection.

Shadowlands
(60) Krisalis – Role-Playing Game £34.99
We asked a hundred people who'd played *Shadowlands* if they thought it was a damn good game with a smart control system. They said "Yes". Our survey said "Erk-err". Sorry, they lose.

Stunt Island
(82: Recommended) Infogrames – Flight Sim £49.99
A unique simulation that combines all the fun elements of flight sims with superb 3D construction, film and editing utilities. A bit on the pricey side, but good value for film buffs nonetheless.

Tegel's Mercenaries
(50) Electronic Arts – Strategy – Deleted
Not funny. Not entertaining. And not very good.

The Complete Chess System
(80: Recommended) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Chess £34.99
Good enough for the expert, easy enough for the beginner.

The Legend Of Myra
(65) Grandslam – Puzzle 14.99 – £10 direct
One of the best *Boulderdash* clones to appear recently. Hardly original, but fun for a while if you've got fast reflexes.

Transarcica (CD)
(55) Simarils – Strategy £39.99
Reads a lot better than it plays. Very disappointing.

Ultima Underworld II: Labyrinth of Worlds
(94: Classic) Origin – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Just go out now and buy it, okay.

Issue 2 – May 1993

Archer Maclean's Pool
(87: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £25.99
Excellent Pool game. An impressive, if not wildly different, sequel to *Whirlwind Snooker*.

Battlechess 4000
(81: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99
Brilliant, funny and with a workmanlike chess sim attached. But for how long will it stay funny?

Blade Warrior
(40) Zeppelin Games – Combat £9.99 (£12.99 CD)
Arcade combat jaunt with a smattering of detailed quest elements.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space
(90: Classic) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Testing strategy/historical simulation. Buy it.

Crystals of Arborea
(47) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £2.99
A badly designed RPG with only its price to recommend it.

Heroquest

(66) Gremlin Graphics – Board Game £11.99
A good, but uninspired conversion of the classic board game.

Jordan In Flight
(70) Electronic Arts – Sport £39.99
Looks good, plays okay. There's just not enough to it, and it's a bit too easy.

Metal Mutants
(45) Simarils – Combat £2.99
Impress your friends – this disk makes an unusual coaster that will brighten up any coffee table.

Ringworld
(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
An engaging interactive point 'n' click sci-fi romp.

Shadow Of The Comet
(87: Recommended) Infogrames – Adventure £44.99
A successful attempt to recreate the work of Lovecraft for game players. A must buy.

Space Quest V: Roger Wilco The Next Mutation
(72) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
Better than the usual twee nonsense from Sierra.

Spear Of Destiny
(60) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Out classed, out of time and overpriced.

Storm Master
(70) Simarils – Strategy £12.99
An attractively presented and absorbing strategy game.

Veil Of Darkness
(70) US Gold – Role-playing game £35.99
Good script, easy to play but a little short.

Wacky Funsters
(30) Accolade – Compendium (not available in the UK)
The game never gets beyond being the equivalent of an enjoyable demo.

X-Wing
(88: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Combat £45.99
Fabbo space-based shoot 'em up.

Xenobots
(75) Electronic Arts – Combat £39.99
A spanking good strategic shoot 'em up which has too short a life expectancy for our liking.

Zool
(85: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics – Platform game £34.99.
The best platform game released for the PC so far.

Issue 3 – June 1993

DJ Puff
(62) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
Okay, but it looks like an 8-bit console game.

Dogfight
(50) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Far too easy, major flight model discrepancies and grass can kill you. All in all, a pile of jobs.

International Athletics
(55) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99
Fun as far as it goes, which isn't far.

International Rugby Challenge
(67) Domark – Sport £34.99,
Scores a try, but doesn't quite manage the conversion.

Serpent Isle: Ultima VII Part Two
(89: Recommended) Origin – Role-playing game £44.99
Origin's flair for storytelling and atmosphere creating pays off once again.

Spaceward Hol
(25) New World Computing – Space Combat £44.99
There are better strategy games for free.

Strike Commander
(65) Origin – Flight Sim £44.99
There are lots of brilliant bits, but unfortunately there's also an equal number of "unbrilliant" bits.

The Greatest

(70) Beau Jolly – Compilation £39.99
A good way to save £81.98 and try out some good, if slightly old, games.

The Legacy
(60) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A brave attempt to create a gothic role-playing game which doesn't quite gel.

The Terminator 209
(50) Bethesda Softworks – Combat £29.99
Terminal Case.

Tony La Russa II
(73) SSI – Sport – Deleted
An exceptionally-detailed baseball game, and almost a very good one.

Unlimited Adventures
(59) SSI – Role-Playing Game £37.99
Competent, but not the most essential purchase ever.

Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3
(69) Bethesda Softworks – Sport £44.99
May appeal to buffs, but has nothing to attract the casual browser.

World Cricket
(30) Zeppelin Games – Sport £9.99
Fails to provide either action or strategy.

Issue 4 – July 1993

Boston Bomb Club
(70) Simarils – Puzzle £9.99
Fairly basic but fairly addictive puzzler.

Cohort II
(30) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
All the fun and entertainment of a barium meal.

Eye of the Beholder III: Legend Of Myth Drannor
(64) SSI – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Has none of the feel or atmosphere of its prequels. Strictly for the yellow-fingernailed brigade only I'm afraid.

Freddy Pharkas Frontier Pharmacist
(85: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
An utterly absorbing, entertaining and difficult point 'n' click adventure with some incredibly naff jokes.

Maelstrom
(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
You've read the review – you decide.

Nippon Safes Inc
(66) Global Software – Adventure £34.99
Great plot, nice artwork, decent price but nothing out of the ordinary.

Populous And The Promised Lands
(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Strategy £14.99
One of the greatest games ever written – buy it!

SimLife For Windows
(69) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Strategy £35.99
If you liked *SimEarth*... Fun, but not lasting fun.

Space Hulk
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Death, destruction, blood, gore, tension, fear, and a damn good game as well.

Starblade
(22) Simarils – Space combat/Trading £9.99
It crashes a lot, but why care?

Strike Fleet
(75) Hit Squad – Wargame £14.99
A worthwhile addition to naval sims.

Super Ski II
(20) Microdis – Sport £9.99
Sad, specy ski game.

The 7th Guest
(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99 (CD)
Technologically okay, but disappointingly weak on gameplay.

Tom Landry Strategic Football

(75) Merit Software – Sport £44.99
A very good strategic American football sim that could do with more player involvement.

V For Victory 3 – Market Garden
(82: Recommended) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £34.99
Why bother with boards, hexes and counters when you've got games like this?

Where In Space Is Carmen Sandiego?
(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Edutainment £39.99
Educational, fun and highly recommended.

Issue 5 – August 1993

10 Intelligent Strategy Games

(60) Oxford Softworks – Compendium £34.99
Good sampler and cheap if you need them all.

688 Attack Sub
(78) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
Sub-standard? Definitely not!

Alr Bucks v1.2
(49) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
A potentially interesting variation on a theme which fails largely due to being more than a tad unexciting.

Betrayal At Krondor
(91: Classic) Dynamix – Role-Playing Game £44.99
The licence makes a lot of difference – great story, great game.

Championship Manager '93
(75) Domark – Sport £29.99
An undoubtedly "serious" management game that's involving, but occasionally unnecessarily slow.

Chess Maniac 5 Billion & 1
(60) Spectrum Holobyte – Chess £44.99
Falls between two stools – and I'm being very nice here.

Dizzy Collection
(60) Codemasters – Compilation £35.99
Contains: *Fast Food Dizzy*, *Fantasy World Dizzy*, *Kwik Snack*, *Dizzy Prince Of Yorkfolk*, *Magicaland Dizzy*.
A poor egg-scuse to make totally unfunny egg yolks. Just about playable.

Ishar 2: Messengers Of Doom
(50) Simarils – Role-Playing Game £32.99,
Would have been a real contender if it had been released a year or two earlier.

James Pond 2: Codename Robocod
(87: Recommended) Millennium – Platform game £30.99 –
Only available in a compilation
"Nifty scrolling, great gameplay" is our first remark on playing *Robocod*, closely followed by "Has anyone got a pair of sunglasses?"

Premier Manager
(59) Gremlin Graphics – Sport £29.99
Not recommended as a full-priced game – it would make a good, fun budget game.

Prince Of Persia 2: The Shadow And The Flame
(89: Recommended) Brøderbund – Platform game £39.99
We reckon they could have done more with it, but it's a corker nevertheless.

Protostar
(80: Recommended) Tsunami – Space Combat/Trading £39.99
A slick game that's full of nice touches and good ideas, but if you're not patient, don't bother.

Syndicate
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
Incredibly violent, completely amoral and brilliant fun.

The Cycles
(55) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Sadly, an overpriced and underpowered ride into the past.



X-Wing: groove on down to the old "destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess" tune.

War In The Gulf

(81: Recommended) Empire – Wargame £34.99
Another great set of blood-thirsty missions for one of the most playable 3D battle sims ever.

Worlds Of Legend

(73) Mindscape – Role-Playing Game £25.99
Perfectly reasonable but rather old-fashioned fantasy RPG jobbie.

WWF Wrestlemania

(58) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Fairly limited beat 'em up, which was delivered much better on the console.

Issue 6 – September 1993

Blade Of Destiny: Realms Of Arkania

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Large in scale, absorbing to play – but more suited to "serious" role-players than your average gamer.

Blue Force

(35) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
Tiresome controls and sloppy design mar what could have been a decidedly average adventure.

Caesar's Palace For Windows

(65) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Casino Compendium £35.99
A good compilation; unnervingly addictive.

Fields Of Glory

(89: Recommended) MicroProse – Wargame £44.99
A brilliant sim that puts even the most reluctant wargamer right into the thick of it. Only its speed prevents it from being awarded Classic status.

Flashback

(89: Recommended) US Gold – Platform Game £37.99
It's Prince Of Persia in the future (but this time he's got a gun).

Lotus – The Ultimate Challenge

(68) Gremlin Graphics – Driving Game £34.99
Nothing particularly new, but good fun, especially in two player mode.

Maniac Mansion 2: Day Of The Tentacle

(85: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £42.99
Lovely graphics, good music, quite challenging but a bit too American for my roast beef and dumplings taste buds.

MIG-29: Fulcrum

(70) Domark – Flight Sim £14.99
Almost no scenery, but a nice flight model.

Monopoly

(75) Supervision – Board Game £34.99
A faithful conversion, which is slightly too flashy for its own good.

Napoleonic

(79) On-Line Entertainment – Wargame Compendium – Deleted £34.99
Three excellent and original Napoleonic wargames for tactical experts.

Open Golf

(50) Ocean – Sport – Deleted
A disappointing foray into the world of golf sims from Ocean.

Pinball Dreams

(78) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Simulation £37.99

As enjoyable as the real thing, but a bit on the pricey side.

Prehistorik 2

(50) Titus – Platform Game £7.99
A very average platform game, which competes with some budget titles but little else.

Rags To Riches

(60) Interplay – Strategy £39.99
Lacks excitement; unlikely to have a long life.

Return Of The Phantom

(73) MicroProse – Adventure £44.99
Delightfully atmospheric and aimed at beginners, but a tad too short and easy to justify the price.

Sensible Soccer

(70) Renegade – Sport £34.99
The best football game around for the PC, but still not as good as it should've been.

Space Legends

(75) Empire – Compilation £34.99
You'll like at least two out of three

The Immortal

(70) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
At least four Sunday afternoons' play we reckon

Tornado

(93: Classic) Digital Integration – Flight Sim £44.99
The more you play, the deeper it gets – eventually you'll need a bathyscape. Not for beginners.

Issue 7 – October 1993

Ambush At Sorinor

(70) Empire – Strategy £39.99
Short, sharp missions, and plenty of them, make this an interesting strategy game.

Archer Maclean's Pool (256 colour version)

(88: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £30.99

Exactly what it claims to be – the same game with more colours. Score assumes you don't have the original.

Caesar Deluxe

(70) Impressions – Strategy £34.99
More user-friendly than its predecessor but the game remains the same.

Clash Of Steel

(67) SSI – Wargame £39.99
Intricate and well presented wargame with plenty of appeal for the dedicated wargamer.

Day Of The Tentacle (CD)

(87: Recommended) LucasArts – Adventure £45.99
A very taxing, very American adventure, with some of the best animation ever.

Dune (CD)

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
An shining example of a good game made into a great game for CD.

Eric The Unready (CD)

(77) Accolade – Adventure £34.99
Hilarious, but the creaky interface isn't so funny.

F-15 Strike Eagle II

(85: Recommended) Kixx – Flight Sim £16.99
It still holds its own in a dogfight.

Flames Of Freedom

(70) Kixx – Strategy/Arcade £9.99
A bit old, a bit saggy, but will still give purists much fun.

Galactic Warrior Rats

(75) Alternative Software – Arcade £9.99
Totally simple, totally basic, but quite good fun nevertheless.

Gunboat

(54) Hit Squad – Submarine Simulation £14.99
A better idea than game.

Hardball

(20) Hit Squad – Sport £12.99
Interesting only as an example of how bad baseball games used to be.

Imperial Pursuit

(80: Recommended) LucasArts – Space Sim £19.99
Long, involving "story-driven" tour of duty, perfect for Skywalker-wannabes.

King's Quest VI (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £49.99
Excellent use of a CD, despite the "soft" story.

Lands Of Lore

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Role-Playing Game £35.99
A tasty and involving reminder of what Eye Of The Beholder III could have been.

Legend Of Kyrandia (CD)

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Stunning to look at, but not really challenging enough if you're the type who has played a lot of adventures before.

LHX Attack Chopper

(88: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Still one of the classic flight sims.

Loom

(72) Kixx – Adventure £14.99
Simple and enchanting adventure; an ideal game for beginners.

Mean 18"

(60) Hit Squad – Sport £9.99
Reasonable mid-table golf game.

MIG-29

(75) MicroProse – Flight sim £19.99
An excellent add-on for Falcon 3.0 fans, but nothing groundbreaking in flight sim terms.

NHL Hockey

(91: Classic) Electronic Arts – Sport £44.99
A great version of a brilliant game.

Pirates Gold!

(75) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
As good as the original. Unfortunately, it almost is the original.

Railroad Tycoon Deluxe

(72) MicroProse – Strategy £39.99
Not significantly better than the original, but if you haven't got that then add 20% to the score.

Ringworld (CD)

(82: Recommended) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
An alternative to having it on disk; nothing more!

Rules Of Engagement 2

(91: Classic) Impressions – Strategy £44.99
A game of great depth and complexity.

Seal Team

(77) Electronic Arts – Shoot 'Em Up/Strategy £44.99
In storyboard form I imagine it looked fabulous. In transition to code, however, it feels like something has gone astray.

Simon The Sorcerer

(86: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd – Adventure £39.99

At last an Anglo answer to the average American adventure. Recommended.

The Lost Vikings

(80: Recommended) Interplay – Arcade £34.99
An excellent puzzle/platform/arcade game (categorise it yourself, we can't be bothered).

The Patrician

(65) Daze Marketing – Trading Sim £34.99
Desperate for a trading game set in the Hanseatic League but which could have been given more zap?

Look no further.



Simon The Sorcerer: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour – albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Wing Commander Academy

(60) Origin – Flight Sim £19.99
This is only really worth it for Wing Commander combat addicts.

Issue 8 – November 1993

Battle Chess

(45) Interplay – Chess £44.99
Stalemate for the Battlechess series.

Blue Force (CD)

(40) Tsunami – Adventure £39.99
A criminal waste of a CD.

Conquered Kingdoms

(71) Mirage – Wargame £44.99
The rather second rate packaging and laughable manual conceals a highly playable fantasy wargame.

Cover Girl Strip Poker

(40) On-Line Entertainment – Card Game £34.99
An appallingly bad poker game; a weak excuse for some dirty pics.

Flight Simulator 5.0

(90: Classic) Microsoft – Flight Sim £35.00
The definitive flying simulation, but not the definitive flying "game".

Gear Works

(62) The Software Business – Puzzle £19.99
Not good enough for the price and not cheap enough for what it is.

Grand Prix Circuit

(50) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99
Playable but crap for the price.

Hard Drivin' 2

(30) Hit Squad – Driving £12.99
Unplayable and crap for the price.

Homeworld: Gateway II

(75) Accolade – Adventure £39.99
Long hard trek through pretty unatmospheric space.

Lord Of The Rings

(70) Interplay – Role-Playing Game £44.99
New and improved role-playing Tolkien jaunt for patient fantasy fans only.

Lost In Time

(69) Coktel Vision – Adventure £44.99
Tough, good looking adventure that comes a cropper at the end.

Motor Stars

(75) Revell – Racing £59.99
Sex on CD for kit-heads but coffee mat for everyone else.

Patriot

(45) Three-Sixty Pacific – Wargame £44.95
A revolutionary, but seriously flawed approach to land-based wargaming.

Shadowlands

(65) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £12.99
One for the RPG addicts.

Solitaire's Journey

(87) Mirage – Puzzle £44.99
The closest that solitaire fans will get to Heaven on Earth.

Stronghold

(80: Recommended) SSI – Strategy £35.99
Extremely addictive even if you'd normally steer clear of D&D™.

Super Space Invaders

(75) Hit Squad – Arcade £9.99
Here's a blast from the past for less than a round of drinks.

T2

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade £29.99

Mindless, chaotic and highly addictive.

The Silver Seed (Ultima VII Add-On Disk)

(50) Origin – Role-Playing Game £19.99
An utterly pointless addition to a brilliant game.

One can only turn to Origin and ask "Why?"

Troddlers

(79) SCI – Puzzle £29.99
Not at all bad, but it smacks too much of other games to achieve classic status.

Issue 9 – December 1993

Blue Angels

(30) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £12.99
Interesting, but hardly spectacular.

Brutal Football

(65) Millennium – Sport £29.99
Too much violence, not enough game.

Chuck Yeager's Air Combat

(85: Recommended) Hit Squad – Flight Sim £14.99
Living proof that pensioners still have what it takes.

Clix

(62) The Genesis Arcade – Puzzle £14.99
Nice idea, shame about the gameplay.

Cogito

(57) Mindscape – Puzzle £29.99
A reasonably entertaining and challenging puzzle game, but only for the patient.

Dark Sun: Shattered Lands

(83: Recommended) SSI – Role-Playing Game £45.99
The next best thing to an Ultima.

Dino Dini's Goal

(60) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Sport £35.99
Kick Off with sideways options (but it works). Not as good as Sensible Soccer.

Dracula

(65) Psygnosis – Arcade £39.99
A good, challenging game, but the execution should have been better.

Frontier: Elite II

(95: Classic) Gametek – Space Trading Sim £39.99
Without doubt an unrivalled classic; nothing else even comes close.

Front Page Sports Football Pro

(85: Recommended) Dynamix – Sport £39.99
The best around, but you'll definitely need a high-spec machine.

Gobillins

(50) Coktel Vision – Puzzle – £39.99
An unimproved CD version of an original but inspired game.

Hook

(35) Hit Squad – Adventure £12.99
At last we have perhaps the most faithful film conversion around. The movie was a turkey, so is the game.

Jack The Ripper

(39) Mirage – Adventure £44.99
Ugly, unpleasant and boring. Give it a job with PC Zone.

Jutland

(72) On-Line Entertainment – Strategy £59.99
Good but sadly there are too many unnecessary gimmicks.

Kasparov's Gambit

(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Chess £44.99
Excellent chess game with attitude and personality.

Magik Candle I

(80: Recommended) Hit Squad – Role-Playing Game £14.99
Good as an RPG, excellent as a budget.

NFL Coaches Club Football

(70) MicroProse – Sport £44.99
A good attempt that's let down by the rather poor passing system.



IndyCar Racing: great graphics, and playability make this the best ever driving game.

Privateer

(75) Origin - Flight Sim £49.99

Wing Commander fans will love this. X-Wing fans won't. It's as simple as that.

Sim Farm

(79) Maxis - Strategy £34.99

Quite good if you like farming, but not as good as Sim City.

Steel Thunder

(60) Hit Squad - Arcade £12.99

Reasonable fun, but not one you'd come back to.

Street Fighter II

(81: Recommended) US Gold - Beat 'Em Up - £29.99

Addictive and violent but the cross over to the pc hindered unless you invest in a game pad.

Strike Commander: Tactical Operations

(80: Recommended) Origin - Flight sim £19.99

Essential if you're determined to get the most out of Strike Commander.

V for Victory 4: Gold-Juno-Sword

(78) Three-Sixty Pacific £34.99

It's still the best computer wargames system but it needs a shot in the arm ... or leg ... or both even.

When Two Worlds War

(63) Impressions - Wargame £39.99

An unattractive attempt at a strategy wargame that fails to add anything new - including excitement. Give us dice and counters any day...

Knights Of The Sky

(79) Kixx - Strategy £16.99

A game that's well worth buying for the two-player option alone.

Links Championship Course: Innisbrook

(75) US Gold - Sport £24.99

If you really want another Links course, then this is one.

Links

(80: Recommended) Kixx - Sport £16.99,

An excellent golf game for anyone with a less than ninja pc.

Lords Of Power

(85: Recommended) Ubisoft - Strategy £39.99

A first class simulation which you would be mad not to buy.

Network Q RAC Rally 2

(80: Recommended) Europress Software - Driving £34.99

A rather good addition to the current crop of driving games, if you can stand the opponent's amazing skills.

Newsweek Interactive

(30) The Software Business - General Interest £39.99

Over-priced, over-patronising and over here.

Night Shift

(70) Kixx - £12.99

A suitable frantic and frustrating puzzler.

Oceans Below

(70) The Software Business - Edutainment £39.99

Initially interesting, but unfortunately the novelty all too soon wears off. Strictly for scuba diving fans.

Protostar (CD)

(80: Recommended) Accolade - Space Sim £39.99

Absorbing, well designed and, if you can forgive its weaker moments, it'll keep you busy for ages.

Return To Zork (CD)

(90: Classic) Activision - Adventure £49.99

Bad news for text-adventure purists who thought that Zork was sacred. Ha!

Return To Zork

(90: Classic) Activision - Adventure £45.99

A highly imaginative and enjoyable adventure game with some very clever knobs attached.

Shadowcaster

(66) Electronic Arts - Role-Playing Game £44.99

Neither Wolfenstein nor Underworld. And not much in-between.

Speed Racer

(49) Accolade - Racing £39.99

Nice intro, shame about the game.

Star Trek: Judgement Rites

(79) Interplay - Adventure £44.99

The stories are poetic and the variety of gameplay is "fascinating" but it is not the best flight sim or adventure game.

Strike Squad

(25) Empire - Strategy £39.99

Just turn the page and get on with enjoying life, okay?

The Blue And The Gray

(78) Impressions - Wargame £39.99

Dedicated blood 'n' guts fans will find it a little simplistic, but it's a great all round wargame with hidden depths and long term playability.

The Even More Incredible Machine

(89: Recommended) Dynamix 39.99

If you've never played The Incredible Machine now's the time to start.

World Class Rugby

(60) Audiogenic - Sport £14.99

Not really worth the waggle.

World War Two: Battles Of The South Pacific

(62) Mirage - Strategy/Action £44.99

Innovative mix of naval strategy and action. The gameplay doesn't quite live up to expectations -

Issue 11 - January 1994

Advantage Tennis

(55) Infogrames - Sport £35.99

Unexciting tennis game that lacks punch.

Alone In The Dark 2

(97: Classic) Infogrames - Adventure - £39.99

Absolutely Brilliant! What the pc was made for.

Alone in the Dark (CD)

(92: Classic) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99

Still the best thing since sliced bread. Buy it.

B-Wing

(72) US Gold - Space Sim £19.99

Your sister either fancied Han Solo or Luke Skywalker. You'll either fancy B-Wing or, er, something else.

Capitol Hill (CD)

(75) Software Toolworks - Edutainment £39.99

Comprehensive introduction to American politics

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo

(90: Classic) Mindscape - Chess £34.99

Tough opponent: gentle teacher.

Critical Path (CD)

(72) Media Vision - Adventure £49.99

Slick and atmospheric but way too short.

Dungeon Hack

(62) SSI - Role-Playing Game £39.99

Not enough there. Not enough design options. Not enough gameplay. Very hardened and grizzled role-players only.

Fire and Ice

(75) Renegade - Platform £29.99

A fun, but difficult game, marred only by an over-inflated price and ridiculous copy protection.

Flight Sim Toolkit

(80) Domark - Simulation £49.99

Recommended, but only if you find Stunt Island limiting. It can be very heavy going.

Global Domination

(65) Impressions - Strategy £39.99

Slick, addictive strategy game but it presents no long term challenge.

Goblins 3

(75) Coktel Vision - Puzzle £39.99

Good for beginners and a pleasant diversion for seasoned adventurers.

Kingmaker

(88: Recommended) US Gold - Board Game £37.99

Without doubt the best board game conversion for a long, long time.

Magic Boy

(60) Empire - Platform Game £25.99

Not very "magic" at all.

Master of Orion

(72) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

A good one for all the accountants out there.

Rebel Assault

(93: Classic) LucasArts - Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

It's Star Wars. It's also the most important game to date.

Striker

(55) Elite - Sport £29.99

Another Paul Bodin penalty of the gamesplaying world.

Subwar 2050

(88: Recommended) MicroProse - Simulation £44.99

Easily the best "fun" simulation that MicroProse has produced.

The Labyrinth Of Time

(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Adventure £39.99

Beautiful, alluring, a touch slow and a little fussy. A quite superb adventure though.

The Terminator Rampage

(75) Bethesda Softworks - Arcade £39.99

Okay, but once you've seen Doom, you'll laugh in Rampage's face and spill its pint.

VGA Planets

(70) PAW PBM - Role-Playing Game £24.99

A rather interesting type of role-playing game that takes some time, but is generally worth the wait.

Issue 12 - March 1994

Campaign

(52) Empire - Strategy £39.99

Dim-witted attempt at simulating armoured action - too buggy to recommend, despite colourful graphics and arcade sequences.

Championship Manager 94

(80: Recommended) Domark - Sport £29.99

It's still the best (just).

Championship Manager Italia

(80: Recommended) Domark - Sport £29.99

It's the best too, just with a few more noughts at the end of the transfer figures.

Combat Classics 2

(50) Empire - Flight Sim Compendium £34.99

One classic and two rather second-rate duds.

Companions Of Xanth

(73) Accolade - Adventure £39.99

Awful puns. Questionable Humour. Very Monkey Island-esque. What more could you want from an adventure?

Cyber Race

(64) Cyberdreams - Racing £44.99

Mildly entertaining for a quick blast, but that's about it.

Fury Of The Furies

(85: Recommended) Mindscape - Puzzle/Platform Game

ETBA

A riveting platform puzzler, but not for the easily frustrated.

Gabriel Knight

(92: Classic) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £39.99

Brilliant and frightening offering from Sierra.

Genesis

(83: Recommended) Mindscape - Strategy £34.99

A little bit of Populous, a little bit of Civilisation. Put it all together...

Hand Of Fate

(82: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment

Adventure - £39.99

You've got to hand it to Westwood, this is a bit of a stunner.

Heirs To The Throne

(43) Mirage - Strategy £44.99

If I got this kind of quality from a PD game I'd be blinking well complain.

Indianapolis 500

(65) Hit Squad - Driving £14.99

A once-great giant succumbs to the ravages of time.

Leisure Suit Larry 6

(75) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £35.99

The best Larry yet; but he's getting way past his sell-by date.

Little Divil

(90: Classic) Gremlin Graphics - Puzzle £39.99

An excellent puzzle game with wit and flair.

Police Quest 4: Open Season

(78) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £39.99

A thoroughly professional job for those who can think and click at the same time.

Premier Challenge

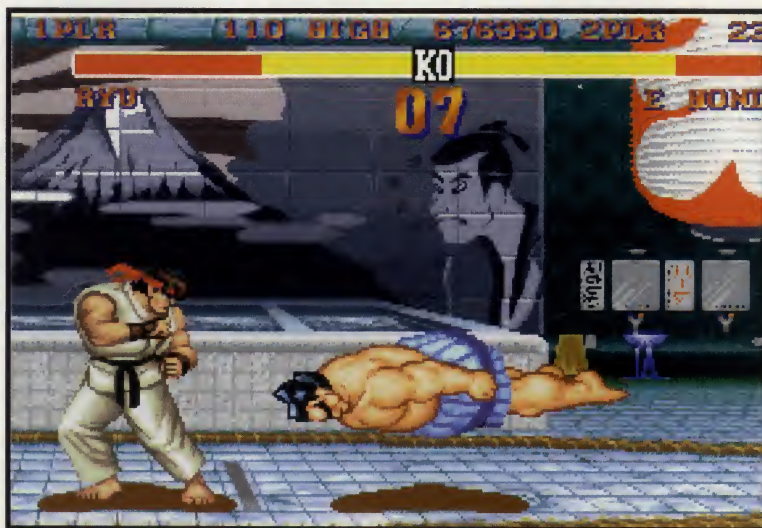
(78) T'ai Chi - Sport £24.99

Design your own game. Boost this score.

Premier Manager 2

(65) Gremlin Graphics - Sport £34.99

It's better, but still too obsessed with interior decorating for my liking.



Street Fighter II: the great console game doesn't manage to pack quite as much punch on the PC.

Shadow Of Darkness

(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £39.99
A Compelling storyline makes up for the dull battle scenes.

The Incredible Toons

(82: Recommended) Dynamix – Puzzle £39.99
Zany, silly and highly addictive.

Issue 13 – April 1994

Archon Ultra

(78) US Gold – Strategy £39.99
More beat 'em up than strategy.

Beneath A Steel Sky

(83: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Flight Sim £39.99
Graphically good and pleasingly puzzling jaunt that you'll feel like returning to.

Conspiracy

(67) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Adventure £44.99
Takes all the fun out of Ruskie bashing.

D-Day

(38) US Gold – Wargame £35.99
D-Day Lies bleeding in the no man's land of wargames.

Daemongate

(45) Gametek – Role-Playing Game £29.99
Out-dated, tedious and visually vestigial.

Doom

(96: Classic) ID Software – Arcade £34.99
The best arcade game and the best multi-player game ever. Doom is the best.

Hired Guns

(77) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Ishar 2 with robots.

Hot Sound And Vision

(85: Recommended) Interplay – General Interest £44.99
An outstanding collection.

Interplay's 10 Year Anthology

(85: Recommended) Interplay – Compendium £49.99
A cost-effective way to build an instant library of classic games.

Micro Machines

(70) Codemasters – Arcade £29.99
A good two-player game (if you have a decent PC).

Mortal Kombat

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Not as good as the SNES *Street Fighter II*, but the best on the PC.

Nomad

(78) Gametek – Space Strategy £29.99
Good game if you're more into exploring than fighting.

Pinball Fantasies

(80: Recommended) 21st Century Entertainment – Pinball Game £37.95

The meanest machine of them all and a worthy successor to the original *Pinball Dreams*.

Reunion

(80: Recommended) Grandslam – Strategy £TBA
Reunion has something for everyone.

Sim City 2000

(92: Classic) Maxis – Strategy £39.99
Brilliant game that'll make you anally retentive in the extreme.

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

(86: Recommended) Interplay – Adventure £49.99
A game boldly going where it's been before, just a little more vocally.

Strike Commander (CD)

(86: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Superior flight sim, but you need the hardware to match.

The Complete UMS

(58) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Both classics in their day, the two *UMS* games are a bit too long in the tooth to excite anyone but the real enthusiast.

The Lawnmower Man

(77) Sales Curve Interactive – Arcade £54.99
Excellent presentation. Just a little more complexity in the gameplay and it would have been unreservedly recommended.

Winter Olympics

(64) US Gold – Sport £42.99
Has its moments, but you'll probably play it for a few hours and thereafter pick it up once a year if you get really bored.

Wizard

(73) Psygnosis – Role-Playing Game £44.99
A good stepping stone into the land of RPGs.

Issue 14 – May 1994

Air Transport Pilot (CD)

(70) RC Simulations – Simulation £79.95
Not my idea of fun but a reasonable effort for a simulation of this type.

Airlines

(20) Kompart (UK) Ltd – Strategy £39.99
Ugly, fiddly and totally boring.

Arena: The Elder Scrolls

(62) Bethesda Softworks – Role-Playing Game £45.99
Disappointing really.



Myst: "great graphics, what gameplay?" disease claims another hapless victim.

Award Winner Gold Edition

(88: Recommended) Empire – Arcade £34.99
Superb quality games with unrivalled value for money. Buy it now!

Battle Isle 2

(91: Classic) Blue Byte – Strategy £54.99
Without a shadow of a doubt, the strategy game of the year.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)

(95: Classic) Interplay – Strategy – £39.99
A stunning improvement of an already classic game.

Cannon Fodder

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment – Arcade/Strategy £34.99

Great fun for all the wrong and right reasons.

CD-ROM Challenge Pack

(75) Software Toolworks – Compendium £39.99
Reasonable good compilation, but there are better ones around.

Championship Manager For Windows

(79) Domark – Sport £29.99
A wasted opportunity. Not as good as the DOS version.

D/Generation

(85: Recommended) Mindscape – Adventure £19.99
Probably the best game that Windows users have ever played.

Excellent Games

(85: Recommended) Beau Jolly – Various £39.99
Great games at a great price. A compilation not to be missed, including *Populous 2*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, *Car And Driver* and *Robocod*.

Fantastic Dizzy

(50) Codemasters – Platform Game £9.99
Wrong time. Wrong format. Wrong price.

Gabriel Knight (CD)

(90: Classic) Sierra On-Line – Adventure £44.99
Brooding, atmospheric thriller.

In Extremis

(67) US Gold – Arcade £37.99
You'll shriek! You'll shout! You'll yawn!

Johnny Quest

(12) Software Business – Arcade/Adventure £29.99
Can basically be summed up in one word. Dreadful.

Megarace

(65) Mindscape – Racing £39.99
A superb demonstration of what can be done graphically with CD-ROM... and how easy it is for gameplay to suffer as a result.

Merchant Prince

(82: Recommended) Mirage – Strategy £44.99
Don't let the dodgy graphics fool you. If you give this game half a chance you'll be hooked.

Microcosm

(70) Psygnosis – Shoot 'Em Up £49.99
Brilliant graphics and excellent sound. Let down by limited gameplay.

NFL Pro League Football

(50) Digital Integration – Sport £39.99
As a play-editor it's okay, but playing the game itself is disappointing.

Privateer: Righteous Fire

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Add-On £19.99
Privateer fans definitely won't be disappointed with this one.

Seawolf

(83: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Simulation £44.99
A highly atmospheric sub sim with a control interface from hell.

Starlord

(70) MicroProse – Strategy £44.99
It could have been excellent. Could have been. Damn!

The Patrician (CD)

(70) Daze Marketing – Strategy £39.99
A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

The Red Crystal

(43) Mirage – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness

(66) Accolade – Sport £39.99
Best described as "alright". It's as good as most American footy sims.

Issue 15 – June 1994

Bloodnet

(75) MicroProse – Role-Playing Game £39.99
Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carriers At War II

(63) Electronic Arts – Strategy £44.99
For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkseed

(90: Classic) Cyberdreams – Adventure £44.99
If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the *Darkseed* affair.

Diggers

(40) Millennium – Puzzle £34.99
Mind numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio

(75) Infogrames – General Interest £99.99
More serious approach with superb sample animations that you can't use!

Dragonsphere

(69) MicroProse – Adventure £39.99
A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

Evasive Action

(40) Mindscape – Simulation £34.99
So close, but more bugs than Watergate.

F1

(40) Domark – Sport £29.99
The champions of sport produce yet another world-beater.

Fleet Defender

(86: Recommended) MicroProse – Flight Sim £44.99
Heavyweight flight sim, both helped and hindered by over-clever graphics.

Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop

(75) Empire – General Interest £49.99
Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

Hornet Naval Strike Fighter

(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte – Flight Sim £TBA

As that well known saying goes: "If you like the *Falcon 3*, you'll just love *Hornet*".

Myst

(67) Electronic Arts – Adventure £44.99
Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strike

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts – Flight Sim £49.99
Miles better than *Strike Commander* but requires a state-of-the-art, ninja PC.

Pagan: Ultima VII

(78) Electronic Arts – Role-Playing Game £44.99
Without doubt a love/hate relationship for *Ultima* purists.

Ravenloft

(78) US Gold – Role-Playing Game £45.99
SSI has finally got "real" and produced a playable and accessible RPG.

Red Hell

(60) Cyberdreams – Adventure £39.99
The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

Directory For Buyers

- 21st Century Entertainment
0235 851533
- Accolade 081 877 0880
- Alternative Software
0977 797777
- Bethesda Softworks
021 625 3388
- Bröderbund 0753 549442
- Codemasters 0926 814132
- Daze Marketing 071 328 2762
- Digital Integration 0276 684044
- Domark 081 780 2222
- Dynamix 0734 303322
- Electronic Arts 0753 549442
- Empire 081 343 7337
- Grandslam 081 680 7041
- Gremlin Graphics 0742 753423
- Hit Squad 061 832 6633
- Impressions 071 351 2133
- Infogrames 071 738 8199
- Interplay 0865 390029
- Kixx 021 606 1808
- Kompart (UK) Ltd 0727 868005
- Krisalis 0709 372290
- LucasArts 021 625 3388
- Maxis 071 490 2333
- Merit Software 091 385 7755
- Microids 071 328 2762
- MicroProse 0454 326532
- Millennium 0223 844894
- Mindscape 0444 246333
- Ocean 061 832 6633
- Origin 0753 549442
- Oxford Softworks 0993 823463
- Psygnosis 051 709 5755
- Renegade 071 481 9214
- Sierra On-Line 0734 303322
- Simarils 071 328 2762
- Spectrum Holobyte 0454 326532
- SSI 021 625 3388
- Three-Sixty Pacific 0753 549442
- Titus 071 700 2119
- Tsunami 081 877 0880
- US Gold 021 625 3388
- New World Computing
021 625 3388
- Virgin 081 960 9900
- Zeppelin Games 091 385 7755



TIE Fighter: Who wants to be nancy Luke Skywalker when you can be mates with big Darth?

RedShift
(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd - General Interest £29.00
A stunning program which will be hard to beat.
Sabre Team
(60) Krisalis - Strategy £29.99
This has all been done before, and done much better as well.
Shadowcaster
(70) Electronic Arts - Role-Playing Game £39.99
Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.
Spaceship Warlock
(70) Reactor/Ubisoft - Adventure £44.99
Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.
TFX
(80: Recommended) Ocean - Simulation £44.99
Great game with totally superfluous bells and whistles.
UFO Enemy Unknown
(93: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99
Brilliantly designed, perfectly implemented and totally absorbing.
Washington DC Scenery
(85: Recommended) Supervision - Flight Sim Add-On £39.99
One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

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Castles II
(65) Interplay - Strategy £49.95
Interplay usually releases excellent games - this isn't one of them.
Comanche (CD)
(90: Classic) Optima - Flight Sim £49.99
Brilliant action-packed helicopter simulation at a great price on CD.
Companions Of Xanth (CD)
(84: Recommended) Accolade - Role-Playing Game £39.99
Great game on disk. Even better on CD.
Corridor 7
(55) Gametek - Arcade £19.99
Nothing new or exciting.
Detroit
(85: Recommended) Impressions - Strategy £39.99
An intriguing strategy/sim which boasts both originality and playability.
Dragon's Lair
(67) Elite Systems - Adventure £39.99
An interactive cartoon that's more "cartoon" than "interactive".
Eye Of The storm
(40) Rebellion - Space/Strategy £39.99
Very futuristic, very Elite and very, very crap.
Great Naval Battles 2
(86: Recommended) US Gold - Simulation £45.99
SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.
Hand Of Fate (CD)
(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £49.99
Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.
Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition
(85: Recommended) Accolade - Sport £19.99
A good golf game at an amazing price.
Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
(80: Recommended) Hit Squad - Sport £14.99
Dangerously addictive snooker sim.
Lucky's Casino Adventure
(60) Mirage - Card Game £44.99
Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

Lure Of The Temptress
(55) Hit Squad - Adventure £14.99
Old and fading.
Power Game 2 (CD)
(70) Activision - Simulation £29.99
Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.
Robinson's Requiem
(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing - Role-Playing Game £39.99
This is a highly original and addictive "survival sim", which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.
Sam And Max Hit The Road
(93: Classic) US Gold - Adventure £45.99
Brilliantly original and a highly humorous jaunt.
Sim City Classic
(70) Hit Squad - Strategy £16.99
Still a great game but check out *Sim City 2000* first.
Sim City Enhanced
(82: Recommended) Interplay - Strategy £49.99
Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.
Sleepwalker
(45) Hit Squad - Platform £9.99
Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.
Space Hulk
(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Strategy £39.99
Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.
Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge
(80: Recommended) Accolade - Sport £19.99
Good compilation, great value.
The Horde
(87: Recommended) US Gold - Strategy/Arcade £44.99
Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.
The Rock 'N' Roll Years - The '50s
(70) Supervision - General Interest £24.99
Handy for '50s music lovers or as a reference - but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.
The Settlers
(89: Recommended) Blue Byte - Strategy £39.99
A damn fine, engrossing game.
Theatre Of War
(70) Hit Squad - Strategy £12.99
Excellent strategy game and it looks cool too.
UFO
(93: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99
Incredibly addictive strategy game.
Wembley Rugby League
(66) Audiogenic - Sport £29.99
This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.
Wolfpack
(60) Optima - Strategy £29.99
Disappointingly average.
World Cup Challenge
(48) Winsport - Sport £29.95
Disappointing, absurdly RAM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

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1942: Pacific Air War
(89: Recommended) MicroProse - Flight Sim £44.99
Two great games - *Carrier Battles* and *Task Force 1942* - in one package. It's a winner!
AI Quadrim: The Gentle's Curse
(40) US Gold/SSI - Role-Playing Game £35.99
The thinking amoeba's beat 'em up.
Burntime
(43) Max Design - Strategy £39.99
Hey, it's just like being there.

Cool Spot
(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Platform £29.99
Charm and accessibility save it from being strictly seventies-up!
Delta V
(64) Bethesda Softworks - Shoot 'Em Up £45.99
Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.
Dinosaur Detective Agency
(42) Alternative Software - Platform Game £16.99
Cheap - but that's no reason to be cheerful.
Empire Soccer
(57) Empire - Sport £29.99
Let down by the small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.
Good To Firm
(50) New Era Software - Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.
International Tennis Open
(88: Recommended) Philips Interactive Media - Sport £44.99
Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.
Jack Nicklaus (CD)
(78) Accolade - Sport £16.99
A perfectly serviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on.
Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)
(0) Mindscape - General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.
Overlord
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.
Pinball Dreams 2
(70) 21st Century Entertainment - Pinball game £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.
Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye
(88: Recommended) Activision - Puzzle £29.99
An excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games available for Windows.
Sherlock Holmes - The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel
(48) Electronic Arts - Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.
Simon The Sorcerer (CD)
(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd - Adventure £44.99
A tricky jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.
Syndicate (CD)
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a bargain.
Tactical Manager
(75) Black Legend - Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.
Theme Park
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive "business" sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog.
Walls Of Rome
(74) Digital Integration - Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.
World Cup USA '94
(78) US Gold - Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.
Zool 2
(82: Recommended) Millennium - Platform £34.99
As they say, if you liked Zool, you'll love this.

Issue 18 - September 1994

Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)
(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with an excellently funny dialogue but, unfortunately, lacking any real depth.
D-Day
(40) Impressions - War Game £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a war game without many redeeming features.
FIFA International Soccer
(70) Electronic Arts - Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.



Theme Park: Sim City eat your heart out.

Harpoon II
(70) Electronic Arts - Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always sloooooow.
Inherit The Earth - Quest For The Orb
(72) US Gold - Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a "sensible" game.
International Sensible Soccer
(78) Renegade - Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.
Liti Divil (CD)
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics - Adventure £34.99
Excellent, original and addictive.
Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes
(35) Megatech - Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.
On The Ball
(68) Ascon - Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.
Outpost
(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.
Shadow Of The Comet (CD)
(88: Recommended) Infogrames - Adventure £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.
Soccer Kid
(30) Krisalis - Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.
Theatre Of Death
(35) Psygnosis - Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.
TIE Fighter
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Treat yourself to a copy as soon as possible.

Issue 19 - October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI - Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks - this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.
Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix - Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).
Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI - Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.
Heimdall 2
(45) Core Adventure - £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.
Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner - Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.
IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).
Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simaris - Strategy £39.99
Sum up *Ishar III* in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.
KGB
(65) Hit Squad - Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.
Kick Off 3
(55) Anco - Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay not up to much.
Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis - Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.
Planet Football
(68) Infogrames - Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.
Police Quest IV - Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £44.99
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.
Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad - Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?
Under A Killing Moon
US Gold - Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.
Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but it doesn't hang quite right.

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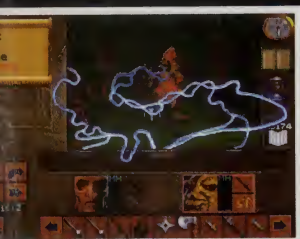
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P411



Mr Cursor

HE'S AFRAID OF HIS PCs AND THEME PARKS



H FOR the age of innocence. Everything is so much less scary when you're a child, because you neither know, nor care, what's going on. You simply laugh like hell and get on with it. You just go with the flow, even when you're being torn to shreds by the cogs of commerce.

For instance: Me, aged eight. Benson's fair comes to town. I whoop with delight, nick some money out of my mum's purse and meet up with my friends (who have also nicked money out of their mums' purses). We're a tiny army of unstoppable ninjas... four and a half feet tall, with an amassed fortune of £9.39. Two hours later we're a tiny army of penniless ninjas who have been on The Octopus, The Dodgems, The Whip and The Dive Bomber. We've all eaten a toffee apple and have had some candy floss, to boot. There's no money left, sure, but we don't give a toss... after all, we've got a small polythene bag which one of us won on the shooting range: and it's got a dead goldfish inside. (The water disappeared ages ago, through the obligatory small hole at the bottom.) We dissect the dead goldfish with our pen-knives, hold a "ninja conference", and then - conference complete and plan decided - creep up the garden path of the old woman everybody calls Mad Molly, and push all the little smelly fish pieces through the letterbox. Mad Molly spots us through the window, bursts out of her front door and then throws bricks at us from her garden, as we run, laughing and chirping, down the road. And so on.

But that was like ages and ages and ages ago. It may as well have been in Victorian times, to all intents and purposes. Everything was made of wood, basically. The point is, however, that even though we were obviously fleeced of our money at Benson's fun-fair, we were not aware of it and so enjoyed every moment. And at least we paid only for the rides we wanted. But what if our ninja gang-members were all eight, nine or ten year olds today? Far more sophisticated animals. We'd still take little note of snoozy world events as shown by television news and suchlike, admittedly, but what about the stuff we'd learnt from playing games on our mum or dad's PC, or our own Mega CD, or 3DO or whatever? Know what I mean? Because when you play a game, and if you mean to beat it, you're forced to learn the rules. And once you know the rules of something, you're sort of spoiled a bit, soul-wise. I'm talking particularly here, of course, about Bullfrog's game *Theme Park*. So, as a sort of experiment, I recently took a trip to Chessington World of Adventures with a chum, and we pretended all the time that we were ten year olds who'd completed the Bullfrog game on the hardest difficulty setting. Would we be more cynical? Or wouldn't it make any difference? (Oh, and if you're suggesting that the experiment would have been better performed by *real* ten year olds, let me quickly add that getting into character was no problem: we're both still quite happy to play with Lego, for instance. And papier mache is excellent. And Scalextric. And on and on and on.)

THE EXPERIMENT

A Theme Park Diary, by Mr Cursor (10) and Stewart (10)

2.20 pm: Me and Stew enter the theme park and have to hand over most of the dosh we nicked from our mums' purses. Still, all the rides are free from now on, so the cash left over can be labelled "food money".

2.25 pm: The first thing we see is a "gift shop". Very clever. Just like we do in the Bullfrog game. Neither of us is stupid enough to buy anything though - even if the green, day-glo plastic skull does

look quite smart.

2.35 pm: We realise that the signposting is pretty atrocious. We haven't got a clue where we are, have become rather bored, and so decide to get on the first ride we come across rather than waste heaps of time locating a particular main event.

3.00 pm: The queue for the monorail was longer than we expected: in the *Theme Park* game there weren't any options for "upstairs" and "downstairs", for example. We're both very pissed off now, but at least we can see where the Vampire ride is situated. This monorail should be faster, though. And higher. And it should have a loop-the-loop and a corkscrew. In other words, it should be a roller coaster.

3.32 pm: I wasn't allowed on the Vampire because I wasn't tall enough. I had to wait 15 minutes for Stewart (who's bigger) to have his go. I bought a hot dog and a coke while I was waiting, and now we haven't got any money left. And Stewart says the ride was shit anyway. (Oh, and yes, of course I was allowed on the ride in reality, but don't forget we're pretending I'm ten... but for what it's worth, I thought the Vampire was shit as well.)

4.35 pm: We decided that the water ride looked cool, and it was quite good while it lasted. But the queue to get on it was beyond a joke: obscured by massive bamboo hedges, the path twisted and turned like a python, and went up and down, too - for about half a mile. And when we finally got to the building where the business of boarding the boats took place, there was a sign that said "Queue time 20 minutes", which meant from that actual point, because the queue continued inside! If I'd pulled a stunt like that in the Bullfrog game I would never have made it beyond the first location, even on the "easy" setting.

5.00 pm: We accidentally stumbled across the Magic Carpet ride, and thought it was quite good. And the Swinging Galleon Ship we found 15 minutes later was even better, because the queue was so small you could go on again and again and again. So we did.

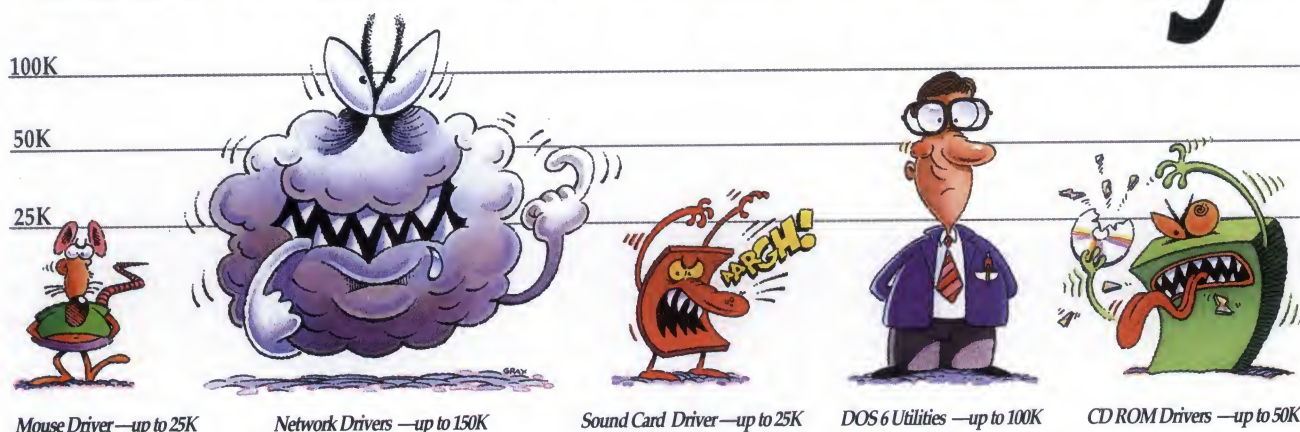
5.45 pm: We're now bored shitless, and because the signposting is so bad we can't find any new rides - or the exit, for that matter. We seem to be going round in circles. There appears to be a zoo here too, but the cages we've encountered so far - on our quest to leave - are far too small to be considered humane (in our opinion). We are both becoming clinically depressed. And the animals don't exactly look over the moon, either.

6.00 pm: We decide to commit suicide next to the Terror-Tomb: beneath the plaque which proclaims "This ride was opened by Ulrika Johnson". We don our personal stereos, insert our specially prepared Judas Priest cassettes, open our pen-knives, and hack repeatedly at the veiny side of our 10 year old wrists.

6.05 pm: (No further entry).

And that was that. Experiment over. And the findings were bleak, both for adults and sophisticated kids. We wondered what to do next, held a grown-up "ninja conference", and spent the next half an hour in the car park (a field) performing 40mph handbrake turns in Stewart's Beetle... studying the alarmed faces of people who suspected we might accidentally prang their M reg Cordobas or whatever. That cheered us up no end. Then we held another "ninja conference" and decided to head for our real childhood stomping ground and deposit some items through Mad Molly's letterbox. "Would she still be there?" we wondered en route. Unfortunately she wasn't. Neither was her house. Or her road, come to that. A brand new Safeways Superstore complex had beaten us to the jump by about a year. Bastards! ☒

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